00022805

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018

GEORGE FREDERIC WATTS

VOL. III

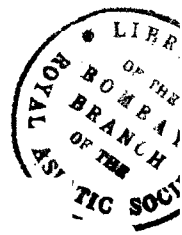
HIS WRITINGS

From part of the Caractacus Cartoon
at Betteshanger

GEORGE FREDERIC WATTS

VOLUME III

HIS WRITINGS



22805
ae

Y. 4-57

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1912

927.592
Wat/wat/Gec
22805

COPYRIGHT

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY ix

UNPUBLISHED

I. THOUGHTS ON ART. NOTES TO STUDENTS . . 1

II. SOME LETTERS AND DICTATED NOTES UPON THE PALETTE AND VEHICLES OF G. F. WATTS . . 56

PUBLISHED

III. NOTES BY G. F. WATTS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON, EDITED AND COMPILED BY TOM TAYLOR 80

IV. THE ROYAL ACADEMY COMMISSION (1863) . . 99

V. THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF ART (1880) . . 147

VI. LETTER TO LADY MARIAN ALFORD (1881) . . 191

VII. ON TASTE IN DRESS (1883) 202

VIII. THE AIMS OF ART (1888) 228

IX. THOUGHTS ON OUR ART OF TO-DAY (1889) . . 235

CONTENTS

PAGE

X. More Thoughts on Our Art of To-day (1889) . 244

XI. The National Position of Art (1889) . . . 257

XII. On Plain Handicrafts (1892) 272

XIII. Our Race as Pioneers (1901) 277

UNPUBLISHED

XIV. Thoughts on Life 295

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACE PAGE

From a part of the Caractacus Cartoon at Betteshanger (1843) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Silenus. Etching after J. H. Mortimer xiv

The Wounded Heron (1837) 54

Alfred inciting the Saxons to resist the Danes (1847) . . 78

Study. Mrs. Thoby Prinsep 78

Satan calling up his Legions. By G. F. Watts, 1849-50, from a Sketch for a Design not carried farther . . 98

Miss Julia Jackson (Mrs. Leslie Stephen) 98

Miss Fenwick 146

Miss Emma Brandling (The Lady Lilford) 146

A Study (1874) 190

Miss Adeline Jackson 190

Love and Death (1879-87) 200

Miss Mary Jackson (Mrs. Herbert Fisher) 200

Love and Life (1884-85) 226

Olympus on Ida. From a small Sketch for the larger Picture 234

The Honourable Evelina Rothschild (Mrs. Clive Behrens) . 234

Green Summer (1901-1903) 242

Lilian (1902-1904) 242

Statue of Lord Tennyson at Lincoln (1899-1903) . . 256

Physical Energy (1883-1904) 270

Whence! Whither! (1904) 276

Destiny (1904) 294

INTRODUCTORY

A FEW forewords as a preface to this collection of my husband's notes upon art and upon various other subjects seem to be necessary, to explain and excuse their fragmentary character. They were generally written down by him as they came into his mind during his day of work, and as he walked to and fro between the many canvases upon which it was his custom to work on the same morning. When some thought occurred to him,—it might be to serve his purpose when replying to a letter, or it might be a thought he wished to remember and possibly carry further in some hour of leisure,—he would seize the first scrap of paper at hand, and, generally in pencil, would scribble down the words.

Incomplete as they must remain, the notes on art, sometimes written and sometimes spoken, may be of use to the student; even though some of these latter may happen to belong to the very alphabet of art-teaching rather than to any advanced theory. These were probably given as criticism, or as advice to the amateur.

To these notes on art, a few of his thoughts upon more general subjects have been added,

because they appeared to have a certain biographical value by revealing that quality in his mind which seemed naturally to seek out the elemental in all things, whether for practical everyday use or for more abstract and imaginative purposes.

The notes written to Mr. Tom Taylor upon the art of Haydon in 1853 are the earliest published writings by my husband. The evidence given by him before the Commission on the Royal Academy is characteristic. The articles published in the *Nineteenth Century* and in the *Magazine of Art* need no words of preface, beyond the expression of grateful thanks to the Editors for the permission so kindly given to me, which allows of their republication.

To these few forewords may be added a few afterwords which seemed to be out of place at the conclusion of the second volume.

More than eight years have now passed since my husband's death, and during that time I have been sent occasional comments, generally made by foreigners and in their own newspapers, which have expressed surprise that he had not been honoured by a public memorial. I would therefore like to explain that not long after his death the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Edward Poynter, took the initial steps to form a committee to consider this matter, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, our present King, having signified his willingness that his name should be connected with the scheme.

However, at or before a preliminary meeting, a

letter was shown to Sir Edward Poynter by Mr. Briton Riviere, written by my husband and confiding to him the strong personal objection he had to this idea. Such a possible scheme had, in fact, been casually mentioned to him by a friend, to whose surprise Signor's indignation instantly blazed forth, and in no measured language. Sir Edward Poynter and his colleagues, in spite of the letter laid before them (also forcibly expressed), were unwilling to give up the project. Only when his reiterated desires expressed to me on this subject were added, was the matter finally abandoned. His friends thus regarded his great wish, that only after centuries of critical opinion had been passed upon his work should such a national distinction be bestowed. He used to say that only then, all bias of friendship on the one hand, and on the other all feeling of obligation to subscribe—perhaps unwillingly—would have been removed by time.

Contemporary recognition was generous in those first days of July 1904. In the newspapers the tributes to him were many, and critical words were absent. In the *Times* the poet of Eton College, Hugh Macnaughten, gave delicate and beautiful expression to Eton's gratitude. To the private service which took place in the studio at Little Holland House, on the Sunday evening, when he lay there for the last time, the Archbishop of Canterbury came to officiate, and on July 7 a memorial service was held at St. Paul's, where a great concourse of friends and strangers

gathered to pay a reverent farewell. During the week the casket lay in the chapel at Compton, heaped about with signs of love and reverence, and once a day the bell upon which he had had inscribed "Be my voice neither feared nor forgotten" was tolled. On Friday July 8 the ashes were laid in the Compton graveyard. All was in harmony, nature serenely radiant, and such lovely voices as he would have liked to hear sang words of praise and farewell, while just beyond the labourers were at work ploughing fresh furrows for the harvest of another year.

All was as he would have wished it to be, and if indeed "the dead should still be near us at our side," then he knew, and knows.

As far as was possible all his expressed wishes were, and are still being carried out. The collection of his pictures in his private gallery remains intact, and has been much augmented, and also the necessary additions to this gallery, which had been built in 1903, have been made. Although it was never at any time his intention to bequeath to the nation work that was not included in the class he called "ethical reflections," as to do this on the ground of artistic merit would, he often maintained, be great presumption on his part, there were pictures for which he had mentioned certain destinations. Acting under the best advice, the executors, somewhat hampered by a verbal error in the will, have done their utmost to accomplish what they knew he would have approved of.

INTRODUCTORY

I should like to thank all who helped me in this difficult matter, as well as all those who have kindly lent me letters for use when writing the annals of my husband's life, and those who have generously given time to read the MS., and have thus saved me from making some of my worst literary blunders.

Silenus

Etching after J.H. Mortimer

Copy in chalk made by G.F. Watts
aged thirteen

I

FRAGMENTARY NOTES

To Students

I

On art generally.

Up the hillside of Excellence there must be no stopping to look for footprints—no stopping!

The way if not always rugged is always steep. Never mind where your predecessor has trod, but see where he has arrived. The student must not forget that though brilliant genius may enable an artist to produce rapidly, rapidity must never be aimed at. Art is the product of leisure, and will be judged and placed by leisure. Tintoretto and Velasquez painted with great dexterity and rapidity, and their works are admired for these qualities, possessing as they do others of the highest excellence,—yet even in their case it is interesting to note that the possessors of collections containing good examples of all, constantly turn with more affection to the gentle earnestness of earlier schools. There is no quality more admired and none so much respected as sincerity, even by the insincere.

In all things he undertakes, the work may be

On art generally.

done honourably or dishonourably, but beyond that the art student finds nothing to stir his higher aspirations. If it does not occur to him that his work may help on the cause of humanity, he is not told so. It is not impressed upon him that there is any religious obligation associated with the cultivation of the special talent he is supposed to possess. The honourable youth entering on study for the church, or training to become a statesman, understands and feels that these conditions are annexed to the qualifications he labours to acquire. The poet acknowledges the like demands. The soldier and sailor feel that they are called upon to sustain the dignity and stability of the country, and that while their profession may lead to honour and wealth, the guiding star of their lives shines with a purer ray. The ordinary student of a profession which, almost more than any other, deals obviously with everything that is most beautiful and consequently farthest from the sordid accumulation of modern social conditions, receives as part of his training no intimation that anything is to be expected from him beyond a knowledge of anatomy and careful observations, and endeavours after faithful reproduction of natural physical effects. The earliest art, always devoted to great and serious objects, naturally carried with it great and serious consciousness. One cannot look upon the frescoes of Giotto, Orcagna, etc., without feeling that they were imbued with the same spirit that inspired the *Divina Commedia*. The service the

artist entered upon implied this, and whether he was to make any figure in the world or not did not concern him—what he had to do was to be done with all his heart and soul. He hoped to impress, but not to be lauded for his dexterity, and certainly did not feel that the critic was behind him, ready to pounce upon shortcomings or to condemn professionally. On art generally.

II

In the language of art human ideas must take human form, no others will appeal to the human understanding, no others can be intelligible. The loss in daily social life of that which the Greek saw constantly is an incalculable deprivation to art. Of loss to the eye.

III

A picture has no right to be suggestive of ugliness, as a musical composition has no right to be suggestive of discord. The greatest ugliness, in my opinion, is that which produces mental and intellectual degradation. The wisest have said, every art aims at some good end, that alone is good which is pure and noble. I can never consent to consider any art great, in which beauty and nobility do not form the principal qualities; the more so since it is conceivably possible that the progress of science may mechanically produce more perfect results of technique than the hand of man. At any rate, the intellectual are those which are most absolutely out of the reach of the mechanical. Beauty in art.

IV

Beauty in art.

All that would be out of place in the boudoir of the most refined princess is equally out of place in refined art. Frankness is desirable, but should be without coarseness of suggestion.

V

The practice of art.

An artist's work should be his first and his last thought.

VI

Simplicity.

The great poet and the great artist can forget himself and his means in his work, but this can only be when mastery over them has rendered him independent.

VII

Sincerity.

Sincerity of belief, and sincerity in action—these two will never fail to produce results. The higher the conception for belief, and the more sincere the action, the worthier and greater will be the result. In all cases where any artistic evidence has come down to us, there is one thing in common—evident sincerity.

What I try to point out to every one now is that whatever is done from sincere conviction must come to something. Wherever one finds it, wherever one sees it, the mark is there plain enough. On the other hand, if the sincere conviction is wanting, or the work is for some other end first, and not because it is the only thing the

man desires, an impression of vagueness is the inevitable result. I believe this is the most important and valuable truth to bear in mind throughout life. Sincerity.

VIII

We are not Greeks or Italians, and must not try to reproduce their art, but as art must speak through the representations of material forms, the principles governing material forms, being laws of nature, belong especially neither to Greeks nor Italians; therefore we must, so far as those principles are concerned, be at one with them. The unchanging and unchangeable laws and principles of creation which the Greeks unquestionably discovered must be the same in all parts and climes, and therefore as applicable now as then. Nor does this apply merely and exclusively to the outward expression in painting and sculpture. Symbols by which impressions and feelings are expressed will continue to be used in art, as they are used as metaphors in poetry. For instance, in modern as in ancient poetry are found such expressions as "the mountain frowned," "the calm lake smiled," "an angry sea." Again, observe how naturally, how inevitably one uses the word light for intelligence; and this because both the poet and the painter have to make use of figurative language to express ideas. All such language from the poet is accepted as a matter of course; it is only when the painter makes use of these symbols that it is objected to, The language of art.

The language of art.

and people say, "Ah, I don't understand symbolic pictures, symbolism is not the province of art."

IX

Of form.

The Greeks, Mr. Watts said, had taught him all his principles of form. After very careful study he found that they, perceiving in the skeleton the identity with modifications of the structure of the lower animals, took the greatest pains to accentuate all that belonged exclusively to the human. They accentuated these so as to depart as far as possible from all that belonged to the animal. A careful examination of their work will prove that the truth of it is perfectly marvellous. But if the finest man ever born is set by the side of it, it would be found that it was no portrait. Art is art and not nature. For an example, take the human head. The Greek accentuated the straightness of the forehead, the projection of the brows, the straightness of the line of the nose, the size and looseness of the chin, because they were all entirely human characteristics. The Greeks shortened the space between the chest and stomach, and lengthened it from the throat to below the breast in man and woman.

In the frieze of the Parthenon a considerable importance in size is given to the head, for the reason that as the figures are many and grouped together, the head requires an importance not necessary where the whole figure is used to represent the idea. Therefore in the groups of the

frieze an importance was given to the head by purposely somewhat enlarging it, and in the separate figure a more generally symmetrical balance was given to the whole by somewhat diminishing it. In the frieze, therefore, the head counts for so much more. This was felt to be a more decorative treatment. Of form.

X

The big oblique muscle is next in nobility to the pectoral muscle, but this is so seldom developed now that it is rare to find a model in which it is well marked. The Greeks made much of the great oblique and of the pectoral. They gave prominence to the head, for although they made it rather small, it was distinguished and prominent from being raised up on the column of the neck and out from the plane of the shoulders. Then the pectoral muscle was made large and grand, covering as it did the chamber of the breath of life. Finally the oblique was made large, while the muscles of the stomach beside it were made very little of. They made much of the chamber of the heart, and little of the kitchen of the body. Of form.

XI

Form is the only expression in art that is not dependent on vagaries of taste, having scientific laws for its principle. Although there are no defined rules that can be laid down, for what one man thinks beautiful another may dislike, there are some great principles which, when applied, Of form.

Of form. should present themselves to our mind as reasons for our admiration. For instance, the length of jaw from throat to chin is a beauty, for the reason that it conveys a sense of freedom and looseness, and generally increases the beauty of lines as seen both from the front and also from the back of the neck over the skull, the looseness of the jaw giving a better balance and a great sense of freedom.

XII

Of form. The human form is considered to be the highest expression of beauty and perfection for the following reasons. It is adapted to the greatest number of uses; its powers within the limits of its strength being certainly, as far as the hand is concerned, inexhaustible. The erect form rises upwards, indicative of the aspiring mind, a characteristic not shared by any other animal. The beautiful head is poised on a splendid column, the neck, which is elevated from the base line formed by the spread of the shoulders. The balanced rotundity and flatness of the limbs; the lovely movements of the wrist and marvellous structure of the hand, its powers, as has been already said, apparently almost inexhaustible; the general harmony of proportion, several parts of the body being neither too short nor too long for beauty—these compare to advantage with analogous parts of the lower creation. In the animal and bird creation the body is all more or less prone.

XIII

The special beauty of the human being lies in the junctures—therefore to disguise these is bad in principle. Perhaps the most beautiful form in the whole structure is the ankle and instep. Of form.

XIV

(When critising a painting Mr. Watts pointed out that the two convex forms of the thigh, the one opposite the other, are never found in a natural support.) Of form.

XV

All lines curve towards their object; this is very important in the study of the human figure. For example, take the line of the eyelid round the eye-ball, or the green sheath of the rose-bud. Of form.

XVI

Beautiful drawing is when every part of the form is exactly represented. This will be when the delicate and precise line indicates the exact place and form of the bone, tendon, and muscle, and this is perhaps the most beautiful as it is the most architectural, but it does not harmonise with rich colouring and powerful light and shade. The same perfect drawing may be seen where there is apparently no drawing at all, when a finger, for example, is expressed by one sensitive glowing sweep of colour—if the precise and intricate form can be drawn upon the Of drawing.

Of drawing, member without making any change, it will be clear that all is there.

This peculiarity is so remarkable in the Parthenon fragments that the connoisseurs thought them quite unstudied, and masons' work. There is an arm, of which we have only a cast, the marble being still in its place, which is so simple that the ordinary observer might see nothing in it excepting that it is an arm, yet examination will give one the roll of the bone, and every delicate variety of plane consequent upon the action of the muscles.

XVII

Of form. It makes the whole difference if a drawing shows a thorough knowledge of the form of the bones. It may be like the particular skull or not, but to be a good drawing the underlying form must be understood. Where an artist wishes to express an abstract idea, this knowledge gives him all that is quite essential to him for the right expression of his idea. With this knowledge he finds himself free to give prominence to certain facts and to suppress others.

XVIII

Of form. The points of bony structure ought never to be lost under draperies. Never lose an edge! a clear edge has always a certain distinction about it. Keep the lines as flat as possible.

Avoid the imitation of the classical, by which I mean a certain sculpturesque arrangement, and

a great development of muscle, or rather an evident development of muscle without due regard to form. Of form.

It is not necessary that folds of drapery should define the form, but you must take care that they never represent something which is quite different.

XIX

It is not possible to represent nudity with any attempt at realism without drifting perilously near vulgarity. The nudity of the Greek statues, though presenting wonderfully natural facts, never shows any attempt at illusion. Great natural principles alone are insisted upon. Of the nude in art.

XX

When the clothes are taken off the model, the creature is naked, the movement is naked, the colour is naked, and the effect is naked; without subscribing to the opinions of Mrs. Grundy, the taint of indecency clings to the idea of the *individual*. The better the picture is realistically, the worse suggestively. For the individual character of the figure suggests that it has been divested of clothing, a thing that would not be thought of in real life. Of the nude in art.

XXI

The human structure should be thoroughly studied, and then reconstructed by the artist, in his work, from such information. The modern The nude in art.

The nude in art.

realist works by sight, the natural artists (and among these I should give a very high place to Lady Waterford) worked by an intuitive sense. No one can for a moment suppose me to mean that the sight need not, should not, be exercised, cultivated, and developed to the fullest extent, but it is quite useless or worse to work from models in a set position. To reproduce and realistically represent nakedness never can be desirable or necessary in a picture, with regard to any subject whatever.

XXII

Of study.

The great artist, like the great poet, will forget himself and his means in his work, but this he will never be able to do if his means are insufficient. He must not be uncertain about the grammar or spelling ; if uncertain about these, his utterance will be crippled. The soldier fighting for his life does not think about the rules of fence, but he handles his weapon better for having learnt them.

XXIII

Of form.

But the finest model ever found upon the earth, if set up in the position, for instance, of the Theseus, would not look like him. The Greeks understood where to accentuate the lines, and so to use them to express what they wanted to express.

An emphasis on the difference between the bone and the fleshy fibre marks the difference between greatness and mediocrity.

XXIV

Writing to a young artist he said : " I won't go so far as to say that a work of art cannot be ugly or incomplete, but I go so far as to say distinctly that it cannot be so called unless it has some approximation to the great qualities of natural beauty and completion. I am quite sure no really great work can have a right to be so called unless it be complete from every point of view—breadth enough for distance, and finish enough for close examination." Of fine art.

XXV

The recognition of quality of surface has been almost lost sight of by the modern eye and mind. It is a beauty that makes no effect on exhibition walls, and therefore people have ceased to look for it. It is the want of quality in Romney that places him so immeasurably lower than Reynolds. When translated into black and white mezzotint Romney almost rivals Reynolds. The first artistic efforts were certainly in the direction of realism, but later man came to feel that the real alone did not suffice. What was meant to be a permanent representation must be something more than a realistic rendering of the outer aspect. The personal and changing aspect was felt to be too individual to represent what was impersonal and eternal, therefore the artist—probably without a conscious effort—modified the character of his work, and gave large truths Of texture.

Of texture. in place of facts. This effort was maintained so long as art was employed to decorate large buildings, or to fill large spaces. The effect of this is found in all art of the time, even in portraiture.

The basis of all true art should be the beautiful; and, like nature, a picture should look well quite near or twenty feet off. Pictures wholly painted for effect at a great distance cannot be called fine art; it is the art of the scene-painter and good in its place, but not great.

XXVI

Of the quality of distinction. The loss of the clear edge in all sculpture and metal work corresponds with the smear in painting and the slur in music. It is the difference between the language one would use in giving a distinct order and the language one would use when making a little flowery speech. One is definite, clear, distinct, spoken with a purpose, the other is merely playing with words.

What can be the value of a picture painted from a momentary glance? A dab of green may be clever as suggesting a tree, but where is its truth as a representation, or rather I should say a revelation of nature?

XXVII

The qualities vary. Talking one day of Tolstoi's view of art, and that he appeared to say that bad art was not art, Mr. Watts differed. "It is not so," he said; "varying degrees there are and may be in art

from lowest to highest; even amongst the greatest of the artists the whole assemblage of great qualities is not to be found. Titian as a religious painter might be condemned for want of sentiment were it not for what I call the righteousness of the reserved splendour of his art." The qualities vary.

XXVIII

"Even one great quality may save a work of art and make it worthy of preservation, and the greatest master the world has ever seen has not attained to producing the whole assemblage of great qualities." Quality.

XXIX

In sculpture a sense of remoteness is required even more than in painting. The more real and unlike an illusion the material of your art permits your work to be, the more you must modify that by a sense of remoteness. The rotundity and naturalness of sculpture cannot have any dignity unless it has this sense of removedness, and without dignity sculpture is worthless. Sharp fore-shortenings are always to be avoided in relief. Get the principal lines strong and flat, for that is the secret of monumental effect. The lines should be as precise and sharp as the lines of the twigs on any tree. Principles in sculpture.

XXX

In a drawing from a piece of architecture, while you require the flexibility of the original, stability and weight must also be suggested. The qualities of weight and stability.

The qualities of weight and stability.

Two laws are always in action, force propelling and gravitation steadying.

XXXI

The practice.

Draw constantly from drapery. The eye gets as it were in tune with the law of form and line, and by constant study the mind acquires that knowledge of the natural law which is necessary for great ideal art, where exact imitation ceases to be needed—indeed would be out of place. The truth of natural law must never be disregarded, all is false and worthless if it is.

XXXII

Principles.

In Bas-relief the edges, however low the relief may be, should be sharp. Lines that are blurred in the ground are bad.

XXXIII

Principles.

The leg upon which the weight of the body is thrown should be so far directly under the torso that a line drawn from the centre of the torso should strike through the heel of this supporting leg.

As a principle, when painting an abstract idea with the distinct intention of making it impressive and serious, all flimsiness of form and colour must be avoided.

XXXIV

Of the amateur.

One of the peculiarities of modern civilisation is the transference of all efforts of an artistic

kind to professional hands, and it is the habit of professors to indulge in something like sneering at the efforts of amateurs. This is an error—it is certain that great proficiency in anything demands, and can only be attained by, constant labour, and all results that are laid at the feet of time as specimens of the best that could be done must be such efforts; but freedom from, and ignorance of, technical trammels often permits to the amateur a scope denied to the artist. Of the amateur.

XXXV

The scientific principles of form are beautiful when found either in the human structure or in the structure of the commonest weed. The principles of form which may not be violated in art are the movements of the skeleton and the uses of the muscles, the effect produced by movement upon these. In the skeleton, for example, the movement of a collar-bone is a forward movement only, and amongst muscles, for instance, under the *latissimus dorsi* appears a muscle which is seen when the arm is lifted with the hand turned backwards, and which disappears again when the hand is turned to the front. First and before everything students should make the knowledge of form perfect. It must be knowledge and not memory. Essential truths.

XXXVI

The student should be careful not to take as a guide the technical qualities of any man's work, Of copying.

Of copying. however great. Copying in its effect retards rather than forwards artistic education.

XXXVII

If I had a school I should make my pupils draw from the model a head in full face, and then without the model, and from knowledge alone, they should make a drawing of the three-quarter face. I should let them look at the nude for reference but never allow them to copy exactly. There is nothing to be learnt by copying the nude, it is all so much wasted time. The Greeks never set up a model; they saw what we never see, the human creature constantly before their eyes, and as the Creator intended him to be.

XXXVIII

On art generally: completion. A work of art must never be incomplete, but completeness is a relative term. The completeness of the Van Dyck in the National Gallery is different from the completeness of the 'Prophets and Sibyls.' Visions in art may be visionary, but, while much may be left out, nothing may be added.

XXXIX

Dexterity. In an age of rapidity and dexterity art will no doubt, and very rightly, come naturally to manifest these qualities. The future art may be effective and even impressive, but it can hardly retain the grand dignity characteristic of times more favourable to its noblest development.

That art which tries conclusions with nature will naturally be popular while the results are novel in their dexterity and truth; but the moment science beats the artist who is only made up of eyes and hands—and this it will by producing imitations of a subtlety and delicacy hands will not be able to compete with,—then realistic art will be as valueless as the common miniature by the side of the photograph. Dexterity.

XL

Realism when it means honesty and earnestness needs no defence; and of impressionism as much may be said; for all art at the highest must be impressionistic, as realism could not represent the purely ideal. Realism.

XLI

The idea and estimation of art is too commonly associated with the skill displayed in the technical qualities. These certainly are not to be under-valued, but though these are extremely important as the means of making the poetical and intellectual aims understood, the art mainly to be esteemed for these qualities can never take its place by the side of the great productions of those artists who worked under the influence of nobler objects. Technique.

XLII

To suggest to the human mind its loftiest attributes is surely a greater thing than to present Dexterity.

Dexterity. facts, even by the most perfect dexterity, which is but a higher kind of ingenuity, not really so surprising as the conjuror's art.

XLIII

On realism. To make art perfectly truthful in its expression, and, by making it a faithful record of fact, to give it historical value, is an aim of worthy importance. But here again photography will defy competition, nor can this be the whole function of art, any more than it can be of literature. The range of the former may be as extended as the latter, excepting as regards metaphysics and exposition of science.

XLIV

On realism. There are many who think the best function of art will be the illustration of other men's ideas, but this would be a very poor mission, even if none but the best were to be waited upon; an elaborate illustration of an elaborated idea is hardly worthy of a very original thinker. Of course, to touch any fine sensibility is a sufficient reason, especially in an age when solid interests predominate, nevertheless the illustration of another man's fancies or ideas is but the translator's office. The so-called historical picture, unless dealing with contemporary subjects, is but a costume picture, and will convey very little to the spectator. The artist who paints Cæsar encouraging the boatmen who bore him to his fortunes knows

no more about Cæsar than the purchaser of the picture, who will learn from it nothing worth putting into his head, though perhaps the record may be worth something, for it is well to be reminded of constancy and courage. On realism.

I do not know whether the world has grown out of or not yet come to my view that the highest art is that which, taking for its means of expression line and colour descriptive of human form, should perhaps, more like music than poetry, suggest the highest emotions, sentiments, and phases of thought as the outward manifestation of humanity.

XLV

In a painting the nearer the approach made to realism the farther it is removed from that mental excellence which belongs to suggestive beauty. Attempted competition with reality must entail certain failure. No production of genius, or acquirement, can rival the natural conditions of life, but a poetic presentation of them may, when the limits of the materials employed are acknowledged, be almost perfect. On realism.

XLVI

The poetic fact may be put together by careful observance of the beautiful elements, the ideal rendering may be less true as to facts, but more true to the mental impression, and this will be a greater thing. The impressiveness of Michael Angelo's Prophets and Sibyls is not The essential truths.

The essential truths.

increased by the truth of the anatomical details, though this quality added makes them greater than they would have been if it could have been objected to them that these were, as in the case of Blake, defective. The absence of defects will not make a work in the highest degree perfect, but the presence of defects will detract from the excellence of the best. The ideal will only appeal to the ideality ; the savage who would probably comprehend the truth of a representation by Denner would be puzzled by Jeremiah in the Sistine Chapel.

The possession of the ideal faculty in a high degree in literature does not always enable its possessor to appreciate it in art, as this is probably dependent on the appreciation of physical form. The poetic side which receives impressions from excellence of organic form seems to be as a rule rather defective in northern countries, so that the northern mind has expressed itself in verbal poetry rather than artistic form. When the artistic expression is used, success is more complete in landscape than any other direction. It is not uncommon to find a highly poetic temperament, highly appreciative and even productive of verbal poetry, insensible to poetry in painting and sculpture. This most likely would have been as uncommon in ancient Athens and in the south as it is common in the north. Perhaps the perfect appreciation of organic and perfect perception of inorganic beauty cannot exist at the same time. For

instance, the perfection of an arm among the Parthenon fragments whose pure beauty of line and exquisite grace of cultivation expresses much to Leighton, myself, and to one or two others of our brother painters, says nothing whatever to one of the finest art intellects—Ruskin. The essential truths.

XLVII

It is most probable that the chrys-elephantine statues would shock modern ideas, for it is certain no natural effects were imitated or recalled. It is not to be supposed the statue of Pallas Athene was very realistic. A merely big woman, however like life, would not have over-awed the army of Attila. In imagination alone can the majesty of the goddess be conceived, before which the savage hordes shrank abashed, forbearing the expected plunder. The ideal.

From the descriptions that have been preserved, and from the example come down to us in the fragments of the Fates, it is possible to realise the "tender grace" and serene divinity of the goddess as she stood a miracle of beauteous yet awful dignity. Such things most likely can never be done again, this production was the natural result of conditions so favourable. The artist, whatever may be his gifts, must be a man of his time, in advance of it no doubt if a real artist, but still of it; human passions and emotions are the same in all ages, modified only by circumstances. The conditions of life in which the poet lives do not affect him.

The ideal. His creations are not presented to the reader by the outward characteristics, when expressing the thoughts of his age. The artist's eye from habit will become, so to speak, saturated with beauty or ugliness, he must be affected by reality; if the things he is for ever taking in are noble, nobility will be his natural artistic language and material, and vice versa. If he, not finding in his material life what he requires, is driven to invent, he will produce monstrosities, or reproduce what has been done before under favouring conditions and therefore spontaneously; but such reproductions will no longer be of any value, not being spontaneous products.

XLVIII

Michael Angelo. When speaking of the writers on Michael Angelo, Mr. Watts said: "They none of them quite enter into his mind. Dissatisfied with the known, he yet did not attempt to penetrate to the unknown. He said to his statue of Dawn, 'Speak,' and did not seem to recognise that art must speak with the 'still-small voice.'"

XLIX

Of colour. The birthplace and natural dwelling-place of art must be in a land of sun and leisure, but we must tempt it at least to be with us if only as a guest. As far as colour is concerned, there can be no great art that has not for its religious basis sun-worship. It is by the sun's

influence that we live and breathe and have activity, in fact life! A picture cannot be in harmony, cannot beautifully or even scientifically suggest life, or the relations of our being, that is not pervaded by (as far as material pigment can effect such a result) the sun's light. This the great artists of Italy knew instinctively, if they did not reduce it to a principle; indeed it was not necessary they should do so. The sun had so much to do with their life that his splendour could not be absent from any representation, or suggestion of natural conditions. What could be called a white or a black picture is, I think, not to be found in the whole range of Italian schools of great art. White and black pictures are to be found in the Dutch, French, and English schools. Black is death—an absence of atmosphere that might be found in the moon, but not in our planet where life is found. Even in the shadow of moral and mental character, if through self-engrossment, malice, or repulsion, no light or warmth penetrates, there also is death, cold black death. Of colour.

L

When attention is almost exclusively directed to the relative value of tones, relative beauty of theme and of quality seems to be almost equally forgotten. Of excess of mere tone.

LI

The French dictum *Il y a dans la nature* A grey tone.

A grey tone.

que des gris, et les valeurs des gris eliminates all the splendour of nature, for splendour depends on colour.

It is fortunate for our delight that the effects of nature are not arranged on this principle—grey mountains, grey trees, grey light, grey everything—existence would have been dull indeed. Instead of this, nature seems to be prodigal of colour.

LII

Greatness in art.

I have been, I think I may say during my whole life, distressed to see the grand intellectual and imaginative qualities so manifest in our literature, when devoted to art, broken up, so to speak, into fragments instead of being gathered up for a crown.

The professors of art must not be blamed. I know by experience it is a hard thing to give up the satisfaction of popularity and the advantages of a good professional income ; in the majority of cases such a relinquishing would be even culpable. I love art, and am only desirous that power should be used to place art in England on a level with her best achievements in other directions.

LIII

A natural expression.

Art has ever been the mode by which man has, more than by any other, expressed the happiest as well as the most devout side of his sense of being. While poetry and music have given utterance to weariness and sadness and

misery and despair, art when thoroughly natural has dwelt upon the gracious and the beautiful— has drawn its inspiration exclusively from the qualities of nature. Almost certainly art was the language of interest and pleasure, long preceding any expression in poetry. A natural expression.

LIV

The earliest and most natural function of art was to assist the stammering utterance. The prehistoric savage expressed his interest and wonder by scratching representations of the creatures he hunted, or of which he was often a prey ; he denoted his awe by setting rude arrangements of stone in honour or deprecation of the powers he felt in the earthquake or thunderstorm. As he acquired power of expressing his emotions in language, art, while retained by his acquired perception of the beautiful, became less direct and simple, until as we approach modern times it becomes almost wholly fanciful (and a complicated-fanciful) in its dedication to subtle effects. A natural expression.

LV

The professors of art in modern times are at a great disadvantage. Not only are their ordinary surroundings inartistic and unbeautiful, but what might appear to be a great advantage, namely, scientific advance (for instance, the photograph of instantaneous movement), is, I believe, a positive disadvantage. The simplicity of nature is con- The simplification of fact.

The simplification of fact.

founded by a presentation of facts the artist cannot apply. For in a work of art every circumstance and quality that does not immediately enter into the necessities of the case should be excluded. It therefore follows that when the actual and mental visions were accustomed only to obvious conditions, the artist could set about representing these with far less difficulty than now, when the presentation of a subject involves consideration of an almost infinite number of facts, either distinctly seen or mentally apprehended. The early painters could do a great deal more work in a given time than those who came after. They had much less to do. Though somewhat conventional in his landscapes, even Titian, who is, I think, still quite unrivalled in his representations of trees in the near middle distance, probably saw less of the miraculous subtlety of atmospheric effects than Turner.

LVI

Study of the human form.

No one of the fine arts, poetry, painting, and sculpture, has anything to do with what is not elevating and ennobling in effect or suggestion, excepting when it may be necessary to record something that ought to be remembered, that for educational purposes ought not to be forgotten. If the human form is not to be studied, painted, and sculptured there will be an end of art. Prudery is one of the worst forms of indecency, for its principles cannot be carried out consistently remembering the humiliations of humanity, and

among falsehoods the falsehood of extremes is one of the most dangerous. The highest and most ideal and universal subjects are those which have nothing to do with costumes or epochs, but excepting for scholars, Rabelais need not exist, and certainly cannot be largely or well illustrated in these days. Whether or not it was necessary for any good purpose to write as he did, is a question I do not feel called to give an opinion upon, but extremes of prudery as conscious or unconscious hypocrisy are something like a reproach to the Creator. Study of the human form.

LVII

A precise definition of what is meant by the term Nature seems to be required, for at present it is understood to imply, when speaking of art, rather an assemblage of those conditions which are taken in by the perceptive faculties, and are rather limited to such of these as are taken in by the eye alone. To my mind this seems very little more than the accidental facts presented to the eye at a given moment, whereas the presentation of these in a beautiful and perfect manner will be art. The greatest art, whether plastic or graphic, will be devoted to the expression of those ideas and emotions that excite enthusiasm and inspire devotion. Truths and not merely facts.

LVIII

A great picture will suggest the facts as they really are—not merely what they appear to be at Essential truth.

Essential truth.

a given moment, and under particular conditions of light and shadow.

LIX

A picture affects the mind through the medium in nature, several senses being alert to transmit the sensation. If the representation of a lion's leg does not carry the idea of its immense power and weight, however true the drawing and exact the actual outward appearance may be, it fails.

LX

Of qualities.

One quality by which great art proves its mission to impress and improve is in sincerity. Like all truly religious work it must be adapted to simple comprehension, not perhaps that the drift of its intentions may be immediately perceived, but if mastered or explained it should satisfy; while it suggests that where it may be simple it must never be mean; if impressive, never coarse; gentle, but never trivial.

LXI

Of manner.

Modern art is distinctly luxurious, and when earnest men would produce something of a higher character, they commonly fall back upon stiffness and bareness, just as some modern converts to Romanism sought to express deeply religious sentiments by producing the quaintness which was mainly the result of ignorance in the early Italian painters; mistaking manner for principle.

THOUGHTS ON ART

LXII

What is wanted is an aim. The use of art is not to produce pretty things, but to open the eyes to surroundings. The function and value of literature is to record and to give the thoughts of others; the value and function of art to translate the thoughts of the Creator. Science shows us the wonders of creation, art, the beautiful completeness of the work. In olden times its use was to awaken and aid devotional feelings; by reference to stories of saints and doctrines, it became a very powerful servant of the Church. Science discovers the laws of being, art unfolds the laws of beauty. An expression in art.

The cult which appeals by doctrine and ritual to the material senses affords the greatest opportunity for material means of presentation and the realistic side of art, but I think as time goes on the modern mind will be less and less satisfied with the realistic presentation, and prefer the parable to the symbol as most suggestive of the spiritual. The severity of an art which has for object the expression of earnest thought to be conveyed by adherence to great principles can never be an anachronism.

As the mind becomes more scientific, it becomes less satisfied with material representations of the spiritual, and art loses its confidence. Besides this, its modes of expression and graduation are not infinite as in verbal language, and the excellence arrived at by any great artist over-

An expression in art.

powers his successor, who dare not imitate and cannot take up an independent position, the field not being wide enough.

LXIII

Art is not associated with the intellectual expansion or aims of the age, and for this critics are a good deal to blame—it is not required and not asked for by the public. Science, poetry, and art are all strands of one rope. It is not Crœsus or Mæcenas that is wanted, it is the assertion of a requirement expressed by general opinion.

Critics usually fail because they do not regard art and literature from the same point of view, and as occupying the same level, seldom taking into consideration what the artist has to say, but only how he has said it. When a literary production is offered to the world, the first thing considered is, whether from a literary or historical or religious or scientific point of view it has any reason for existing at all, and after that its merits as a literary production. Until something of the kind is applied to art the critic can hardly be of service to the artist.

To the established artist, whatever his relative position may be, criticism can be of little importance; but the rising man may be affected, it may encourage him in extravagances, or discourage more sincere efforts, with the disastrous effect of discouraging his truer instincts.

A modern art critic probably experiences some loss of the appreciation of larger and nobler

conditions, just as healthy enjoyment of simple food is diminished in the epicure. An expression in art.

LXIV

A modern portrait is a short description by telegraphic message, it is enough for identification, but not for rendering the whole individual, or suggesting thoughts, feelings, and actions. Undue praise is given, I think, to obvious dexterity, which often implies that it should appear that a picture has been produced without any trouble. This seems to me to be one of the greatest of errors. Nature does not do her work carelessly, even in appearance, and it is something like an insult to her to show that in imitation of her wondrous fulness, we have thought how we could produce imitation without any difficulty. Indeed, I believe it is a mistake to suppose the pleasure in dexterous work, however good, is lasting. Of modern errors.

LXV

Of a portrait Mr. Watts had seen where it was clear that it but amounted to being a mirrored reflection of the subject, he said: "The painter has tried to make his picture an illusion, and that is what no great artist should do. In painting the endeavour must never be to make your representation exactly like nature, because you cannot do it with paint and canvas; it will look like something else, and that something else is a counterfeit, and false as a flower in paper or

Of modern errors.

muslin is false. For instance, Millais went just as far as he ought in the head of Trelawney [in the picture called 'The North-West Passage']. He did not attempt to confound you by the similitude, and yet the resemblance was sufficient. You may be satisfied if the pigment strongly and successfully suggests the flesh, but one almost resents an attempt to deceive by saying, 'This is the same thing—this is nature.' You may accept the attempt to produce almost an illusion in drapery or marble, because the thing represented and the means are both mechanical. When you come to things that have life you will never achieve a true resemblance by mechanical exactness; you want something more than mere imitation for this."

LXVI

On modern errors.

Photography has unfortunately introduced into art a misconception of perspective which is as ugly as it is false. It is false in so far that it presents a foreground which makes it possible for the spectator to see the whole of the principal figure without moving his eye, and at such a distance the eye must be so far removed from the subject that sharp perspective becomes an impossibility.

No one if standing quite near can take in through the eye the whole length of a figure without considerably altering the focus of the eye. The rule formerly given to a student bade him consider himself as standing at a distance

measuring at least three times the height of his model. At this point there is very little perspective, as this depends upon the distance the student is from his subject. If his picture is small in size a considerable distance is presupposed, therefore the student must not test the proportion of various parts while sitting close to his subject as the whole case is altered. Some truth he will appear to sacrifice, for probably at that distance his eye will not see all the details he requires for his picture. But he must remember that this is a matter relative to himself and due to the loss of a clear vision in the eye of civilised man, for to the more natural man every detail would be absolutely distinct even at a far greater distance. On modern errors.

LXVII

A portrait should have in it something of the monumental ; it is a summary of the life of the person, not the record of accidental position, or arrangement of light and shadow. Even the most frivolous pass through dangers and sorrows ; there is no living in a garden of Eden, exempt from storms and vicissitudes. Also, if a single figure, it should appear capable of action but performing none. The old masters apparently were always impressed by these principles.

LXVIII

I cannot claim more for my pictures than that they are thoughts, attempts to embody On his work.

On his work.

visionary ideas. But I believe that from a successful attempt to carry out the principle which governs my efforts might come the noblest pictures the world has seen. All I claim is to be pioneer in the direction of artistic thought, the key to understanding my representations being that the interpretation should be the widest; that each should find these suggestions shaping his best thoughts; and that the members of every creed and every sect may find in it what he holds as best.

LXIX

I have used human forms because there are no others by which it would be at all possible to suggest ideas belonging to human conditions, but I have purposely abstained from any attempt to make the figures seem real, or vividly to awaken recollections of reality, feeling the necessity of the atmosphere of remoteness, and knowing that familiarity produces a sense of the commonplace.

LXX

The material language of art cannot teach with Plato, or preach with Bossuet, but with the aid of beauty and nobility in form and colour, art may not be without power to stir in the mind the sense of the essential human qualities, the great distinctively human attributes not bestowed upon the lower orders of creation. For many years I have devoted my thoughts and labour to an attempt to carry out this scheme of suggestiveness

in art. We cannot again hope to produce from devotion alone such art as under favourable conditions developed the patriotic art of the Parthenon, or the theological art of the Sistine Chapel. The range of modern thought requires a different range of suggestions. The new religion of art should be suggestive of the aspirations and responsibilities of the human being, and the more universal recognition of the dignity of duty, the obligation to aid in bringing about general happiness. On his work.

The greatest works of art of all times have been idealistic. The sculptors of the Parthenon did not make a portrait of Pericles, or of the heroes of Marathon, but had in view a reference to their distinguishing qualities: natural conditions affording them the happy chance of producing an idealistic effect without departing from present fact.

LXXI

Impressed as I am by the idea that art in the beginning, when noblest, was symbolical, and took the place literature has since occupied, it seemed desirable to me to make some effort against the prevailing principle that art may not suggest to the mind religious or ethical thought, and that the more intention of a reflective kind there might be in a painting or piece of sculpture, the less it could be truly a work of art. A disastrous principle, especially when so much varied intellect is employed, and so many varied

On his work.

outlets of effort are needed. Art must be allowed the same range as poetry and literature—the graceful, the sentimental, the historical, the ethical, the religious—else it is not worth the serious attention of intellect and culture.

LXXII

The little I can do, for beyond intention and direction it is little indeed (and I need hardly add that the Parthenon and Sistine Chapel are always in my mind as tests), the little I can do has been consciously for many years an effort after the best, not only as far as technical qualities are concerned, but also with the earnest desire to be on a level with the best endeavours of the age, or at least to be in accordance with them. I know it is given only to the few to influence, and I do not aspire to be of the chosen, but I acknowledge the mission of the inspired, and send out my heart and soul to them with what answering beat of pulse is possible to me. If I cannot be among those who have made art a great expression of religious and poetic ideas, I will at least be of those who have greatly cared for its dignity, which I make a duty to uphold.

LXXIII

We want the noblest comprehension of the widest range of human sensibilities and aspirations. It is not to be supposed that any intellectual utterance could be powerless to exhort and console.

LXXIV

Though art is not capable of speaking with the definite force of Plato, it is yet capable, in language beautiful and noble, of conveying to the human mind the sense of its especial attributes, sympathy and charity, the strangling of which in the heat of personal feelings and interests in religion and in politics is perhaps the source of all human injustice and unhappiness. This is the range of thought I would wish to suggest to the better artists who will come after me, applying painting and sculpture not to the production of symbols or allegory so much as to parables. Pictorial and plastic art has at its noblest been employed in the service of dogmas, or of particular patriotic expression, these are not again likely to find full scope for exercise of the most elevated efforts. The wide range of modern thought requires a wide range of suggestions, significance, and appeal. On his work.

LXXV

As it is most necessary to make all classes acquainted with the written language by which human thought is conveyed, it is not less necessary to make the language of art impressive.

LXXVI

The aims of art are not different from the aims of life in general, which should be to add as much as possible to the good of the world

On his work.

(the contentment and advantage of others). Amid the socialistic tendencies of this age, which have for their ultimate object the improvement of the condition of communities, any possible source or means of improvement should not be overlooked or slighted.

LXXVII

On art generally.

Art is not a presentation of nature, it is a representation of a sensation.

LXXVIII

The noblest art can no more be evolved by representation of purely material facts, however interesting and impressive they may be as facts, than the noblest music can be produced by the imitation of natural sounds.

LXXIX

Some artists present the material shape, some can give, so to speak, the shape of the feeling or impression, some can give both, and this would be the most perfect art, leaving nothing to be desired.

LXXX

It often happens that the critic seems to resent what he calls sermonising in art. This is unworthy of a thinking writer. It may not be the especial object of art to sermonise, but it is as much the province of art to produce a serious frame of mind as it is of any other grave

utterance, and certainly no one is obliged either to be bored or to profit by it. Nobility is far more wanted now than at any other time, and there is no reason why pictures should not be sermons. Art is life, and may have as conscious an effect as life. On art generally.

LXXXI

The noblest art is in a great degree symbolic, dwelling upon that which is generic and general, making use of the simplest forms, or rather extracting and selecting the simplest properties from out of the rich mass of infinite detail, presenting a grand whole to the mind rather than explaining the whole piecemeal. Evident care and an honest intention to imitate exactly will always be understood and receive its due share of admiration, and there is no quality that appeals so immediately and so generally to the intelligence as obvious dexterity.

LXXXII

The mission of any creature or thing is whatever it can effect of the best. That which it can do with the most important results is its mission. The mission of the race-horse is to be swift, of the cart-horse to draw heavy burdens. The race-horse may be harnessed to a cart, the draught-horse may be made to run, but neither will be at their best. If a work of art is capable of moving, or restraining, or comforting, these high accomplishments constitute the real mission

On art generally.

of art, the application most worthy of being the object of their originator. If it should be denied that artistic productions can be powerful to such an extent, many would come forward to testify from personal experience that they can.

LXXXIII

There are often perceptions and emotions shut up within the human soul, sleeping and unconscious till the poet and the artist awaken them. How many have felt that mountains and flowers are quite different things after the poet has described, or the artist presented, them.

LXXXIV

Nothing is invented, nothing is new, the poet does but unchain the dormant imprisoned poetry in the reader; if there is no poetry in the latter, for him there is no poetry in the verbal expression of a poet's thought.

LXXXV

The poet echoes the sentiments and ideas of his time, and though often prophetically in advance, he must reflect his age.

LXXXVI

If symbols are to be impressive the artist must to a certain extent sink the pictorial effect and qualities. The range of the symbolic and the pictorial are somewhat different. The symbolic requires reticence and therefore some sacrifice.

Perhaps painting may be said to represent ideas, poetry and prose to suggest ideas, and music to create ideas. These are generally the characteristics of each, but they do not belong exclusively to any. On art generally.

LXXXVII

Art may be so beautiful in its technical excellence that it may seem to be unreasonable to desire more, but it will be like Fouqué's beautiful Undine, without a soul, and therefore a very imperfect creature. Undine with a soul became, in a certain way, a less complete and certainly a less perfect and less happy creature—if a creature without a soul can be a happy one. So, probably, the art which aims at more than an appeal to the eye, from the nature of the difficulties to be overcome, may in a certain sense be less perfect. So much more to attain, and this so difficult of attainment! But, taught by great art, the artist finds satisfaction in the effort after right doing, the sense of right for itself alone, unconnected with the idea of reward or applause; not from an automatic impulse, but from a yearning after the beautiful. This aspiration which lifts us away from and above all else is the most divine impulse that we know, the nearest assimilation with a divine spirit. To be really great it must be an earnest and simple though not unconscious effort. If it became too automatic, it is little more than the mere gratification of a natural impulse which, though lovely, is in kind the

On art generally.

same as any inferior impulse, the result of temperament only.

No art or science, or indeed possible acquirement, 'can be really desirable that does not do something for the qualities that distinguish humanity—the purely and consciously moral, and the still more distinguishing qualities on the spiritually sensitive side. On this side art should unquestionably be an important factor.

LXXXVIII

Of the circle.

The spherical is the one perfect form with which we are acquainted, as it is also the most immense that can be conceived. Let any one imagine himself a point in space, and stretch out his vision on all sides; he becomes a centre of a hollow globe, at length his imagination will fail to carry him, will stop from sheer exhaustion—the boundary line will be a circle. Is it too fanciful to say that in idea all immensity as well as perfect completeness tends to resolve itself into, and be bounded by, the circle, or that there is a latent sense of it in the mind, and that we are unconsciously conscious of abstract comparisons? So complex is our being we know not what fine filaments bind us "about the feet of God," and connect us with the infinite. Who can say what relation each atom of our being, material and spiritual, may bear to the Universe visible and invisible! Of all the phenomena that compose and surround our existence none are more wonderful, or more absolutely defy investigation, than

thought and imagination. Sights and sounds often strike with the strangeness of unexpected familiarity, having perhaps origin far off in the wide unknown. We are fanciful, and the wildest fancies may be forgiven, since perhaps such vague perceptions form the greatest distinction between man and the inferior animals. The most prosaic of human beings have lurking in some corner a germ of poetry, it is a common possession, more common than it is believed to be; if it were not so, poetry would not so often awaken responsive echoes, and be appreciated so universally. Of the circle.

It seems to me, that everything belongs to everything else, part and parcel of the whole. If this whole be sharply divided, it is at the expense of lasting value, interest, and influence.

One of the smallest who have endeavoured after something, my work has ever been a failure, because my perceptions have been too big for my hands.

LXXXIX

Amongst the qualities imperatively demanded as necessary to constitute greatness in plastic or graphic art, style would occupy a high if not the highest place, yet though its presence is distinctly evident, or its absence clearly felt, few qualities so evade explanation and are so difficult to define. Its simplest expression is a sense of size, the peculiar dignity with which immensity in itself is invested. This impression of greatness is possibly the result of an adverse impression of On style.

On style. smallness produced in the mind of the individual acted upon. The savage and the child will feel awed by the bigness that suggests an idea of the impossibility of contest. This no doubt is the lowest form of the sensation as it is purely animal, but it is probably the germ of a sentiment that may expand into an appreciation of what is noble and elevated, perhaps we may even find that the appreciation and admiration for mental and moral excellence, and the respect often unconsciously paid to dignity of manner and carriage, may be traced to the same source of impressions.

It is worth while to consider, and if possible to discover, the laws which govern the condition understood by the word style, and reduce their operation to a principle. The simple and material notion of grandeur is associated with greatness of dimension, (and though this may afterwards be corrected it is never wholly effaced) particularly by those whose perceptive faculties have been most active, whose mental conditions have been most influenced by the physical conditions of their surroundings—the Greeks most of all. Their graceful mythology abounds with appeals to the perception of the beautiful, and is consequently eminently material.

In reality we are impressed by actual proportions. A stone that one might sit upon might have the same proportions as the crag that strikes us with awe, but being small it would not be awful. In passing under the bows of a grand old man-of-war and under a collier the sensations experienced

would be very different, even though the proportions might be identical. This would be owing to the sense of vastness as compared with self in the one case, and of comparative insignificance in the other; therefore to suggest the idea of such size by art, a treatment of the form under certain limitations is necessary. This treatment would not be possible in the case of absolutely regular forms such as the sphere, or the perfectly straight lines, horizontal or perpendicular, though possible in the details of architecture. The impression of vast size is most acutely experienced when only portions of a form are visible, perhaps because the imagination is at liberty to indulge in unrestricted flight. For this reason fragments appear to be grander in character than complete statues, partly because imagination, being a great artist, supplies what is wanting. Place the eye close to any form, and the lines that bound it will stretch away till the sight is unable to follow them into space. An impression of immensity is the natural consequence, and fragments, though portions of a great whole, are small enough as a whole to be viewed with the eye near. The principle is now found. All curves, great or little, restricted or extended, composing the outside forms may be considered as portions of circles. The eyeball being a globe, the spot to which the sight is directed must always be a point, the centre of a circle; if close at hand the centre of a small one, if distant of a wide one. The farther we extend our gaze the wider the

On style.

On style. outward sweep, till the mental and physical eye fail alike to pierce the ever-retreating distance, and follow the ever-widening sweep, this because the eye—perhaps unconsciously—presents to the mind the complete image ; therefore the effect will appear large and the form noble. To this flatness of line suggesting length may be attributed the dignity that some very rude, angular, and even ugly, early works certainly possess. Though all great artists have acknowledged this principle, and have been conscious of the value of what is technically called square drawing, it does not appear to have been reduced to any guiding rule. It is not square form that is good and noble, but form that carries the suggestion of greater form ; straight lines and square drawing will do this, and the sketch for this reason is commonly larger in character than the completed work. The artist, feeling that he cannot leave his forms merely blocked out for want of a definite principle, soon fails in his endeavour to bring into delicate shape and finish, the largeness that was so satisfactory in his sketch.

Nobility in the abstract is not dependent upon dimension, but impressiveness is. Even qualities are associated with the idea of size and extension ; genius and intellect are said to be vast ; goodness great, etc : we cannot get away from material impressions. Constituted by nature to live in the most elevated atmosphere of thought, and ever dealing with the mightiest subjects, Michael Angelo passionately strove to impress on his

designs the character of gigantic nobility. As his means of giving utterance in art (for he was also a poet in the ordinary acceptation of the term) were lines and colour, mainly lines, for he was a draughtsman before all things, he struggled with his means of utterance like the Sibyl on her tripod, often heaping masses of form and muscle beyond the permission of truth and the dignified reticence of nature. In his best figures, the Delphic Sibyl for example, he seems to be conscious of the principle above laid down (that the bounding line round an object should be flat), and there is infinite grace in the length and purity of his line, but this is very far from being invariable, and he has constantly laid himself open to the just criticism of very inferior men. Some writer says the admired "Moses" looks more like a galley slave than an inspired legislator. This is gross exaggeration, but there is a certain amount of coarse justice in such remarks. An example of his defects in this respect is the ponderous figure of Christ in the "Last Judgment"; in his endeavour to express might, he used the outward and visible signs of human strength, huge muscles and heavy limbs, to the destruction of grace and real dignity. Yet Michael Angelo was right in believing that the idea of size was necessary to the impression he wished to convey, and those who contend that power may be expressed in art without size, upon the assumption that in reality it is not required, are mistaken; the artist deals only with the visible, his power of suggesting

On style.

On style. what he cannot demonstrate must be very limited, and will depend altogether upon the emotions the spectator has derived from other sources. In a work of art the impression is conveyed only through the medium of the eye, in the work of nature many combinations are active, acquaintance with historical circumstances, knowledge of character, etc., which are all absent from the work of art. The great Florentine seems to sway and wrestle and cry out in anguish; he felt acutely that his achievement stopped short of perfect success. The utterance of the Greek was unknown to him. Greece was the natural home of the arts. Gods of the Greeks act like human beings; when they fight they use the spear and shield, hurl great stones, wound and are wounded like mortal men, but they are more beautiful and are larger. Size is one of the great distinctions between them and the inferior human race; they are born in the light and created out of the material formed by the delight the Greek took in external conditions. Man invents nothing, all he can do is to arrange and combine various experiences.

The less perceptive, though perhaps more imaginative, people of the north, who derive their conceptions more from habits imposed by an ungenial climate, from mists and darkness, display an inbred fancy and a grotesque arrangement of thought. The horrors of mystery and darkness affected their minds and peopled their misty valleys with beings who could in-

fluence the elements and produce dire results by forces altogether outside the experience of humanity. On style.

Those who have visited Asia Minor, or sailed among the Islands of the Greek Seas, have seen assembled in serene harmony all that is most exquisite in nature, a concurrence of conditions that may well account for the birth and development of the divine faculties. The graceful mythology of the Greeks, which probably scarcely amounted to a superstition, was the outcome of constant communion with such loveliness.

XC

The importance of making the aims and principles of art more generally understood cannot be over-estimated. Fragments from a paper read by Alfred Gilbert at the First Congress of Art, 1888.

XCI

All over the world, joy in beauty as an instinct is coming to an end, as in our own country, crushed by the wheels of machinery and forgotten in the competition for wealth. There was a time when temple, dwelling-house, or workshop gave to any surroundings, however beautiful, the additional beauty of human interest; now our factories, our villas, and our cottages are sores upon the face of nature.

XCII

The Greeks were religious—there have never

Fragments from a paper read by Alfred Gilbert at the First Congress of Art, 1888.

been any great people who were not—but had neither the fanatic fervour of the bigot nor the extravagance of the Oriental. In all things restrained and mythical, their finest poetry was occupied in giving utterance to a different set of apprehensions. To the muse of art it was left to illustrate the loveliness of nature, and I believe in our indifference to the destruction of beautiful scenery, and the callousness with which we desecrate the most delightful localities with hideous constructions, an ancient Greek would have found astonishing proof of utter want of religious sentiment.

XCIII

Music and art fell under the ban of an earnest and even noble conviction, but if noble yet in some respects disastrous. The Puritan excommunicated music and art, and with respect to amusements went further than the Jewish Dispensation which he had taken as a model. Man has always found it hard in matters of sentiment to perceive proportions and preserve the balance. It could not be fortunate to engraft a gloomy principle upon conditions of life made gloomy enough by climate; conditions which created a hardy race when the feverous physical activity of earlier times was in existence. But these replaced by the still feverous but more sedentary life of modern times, the conditions of climate impose a very great necessity for all kinds of distractions.

XCIV

It is no mere piece of sentimental regret that so much real educative pleasure should be denied to the eye of the modern man, whose life is already made too pleasureless, if not absolutely painful, by its toil and struggle. While he is deprived of this pleasure the vitality of art languishes to extinction.

Fragments from a paper read by Alfred Gilbert at the First Congress of Art, 1888.

XCV

Hopelessly indifferent, if not absolutely antagonistic, the English practical mind is to art. Everything that does not present the idea of immediate advantage seems to be unpractical. The unpractical is a bogey from which it is necessary to escape without a moment's hesitation. We must not stop an instant to look behind the spectre, which would often prove only a white sheet and a turnip.

XCVI

For this reason I gladly hail the accounts of the ever-increasing band of volunteer labourers, endeavouring by all possible means to open the eyes and minds of the people to a knowledge of this forgotten pleasure; teaching the boys and girls of our villages and towns to take a delight in some simple artistic occupation, showing them the beauty of a sweep of landscape, or the grace to be found in the lines of a coil of rope. Till the love of beauty is once more alive amongst us

Fragments from a paper read by Alfred Gilbert at the First Congress of Art, 1888.

there can be little hope for art. It is a universal language—everything we use or wear is an expression of it, or of the absence of it. The art that exists only in pictures and statues is like the religion kept only for Sundays.

XCVII

The task of the professors of art is a difficult one—they are in the position of a poet told to write on some noble theme in the language of the slums; painters and sculptors are asked to perpetuate noble and gracious lives, while their portraits are at once deprived of both these qualities by a costume ignoble and ungraceful in every line. The criticism they have to encounter is too often that of ignorance, the work itself suffering from the numerous drawbacks arising out of the system of modern exhibitions. Altogether, to those who consider the matter, the difficulties of art, and the ambiguous position it now occupies, awaken many depressing reflections. In the midst of these hindrances the artist much needs the encouragement of fellowship, and of being reminded that he is giving his life to a noble and beautiful work, worthy of all his heart's love, worthy of his first thought in the morning and his last at night—whether it is that his special talent enables him to stand as an interpreter of what is loveliest in nature or highest in man; or whether it is that the world is made merry by the wit and humour of his pencil, or thoughtful by its suggestive irony; or

G. F. Watts. R.A. O.M. 1837 — Emery Walker Sculp.

The wounded Heron

whether it is that he speaks to the imagination as a poet in language as noble, as forcible, as suggestive ; or whether it is that his genius leads him to do what has been done in civilisations that have passed away, and write in bronze or marble the most abiding record of what is best and noblest in his age. Fragments from a paper read by Alfred Gilbert at the First Congress of Art, 1888.

I feel very strongly that our days of political prosperity and power are passing away, and that the future will know us better from the impress we leave by moral character, intellectual efforts —by poetry and art—than by wealth and political position.

XCVIII

Study the past ; live in the present ; work for the future. Aphorisms.

XCIX

Let the heart dictate, the reason govern, and sense of proportion be chief counsellor.

II

SOME LETTERS AND DICTATED NOTES UPON THE PALETTE AND VEHICLES OF G. F. WATTS

In 1892, after a visit from Professor A. P. Laurie, whom Mr. Watts invited to meet Mr. Roddam Spencer Stanhope and Mrs. Charles Wylie to discuss the use of tempera, various colours, and vehicles, my husband dictated the following outline of his own method of work to me :—

"I usually begin," he said, "my picture with the arrangement of colour I intend to keep to throughout, though in a very much lighter scale.

"The bounding lines of the form are laid in with transparent colour—one of the Earths such as Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna, Burnt or Raw Umber, according to circumstance.

"I am careful to preserve the brightness of my first painting, and never use any under paintings of a dark or heavy colour on such parts as are intended to be light, so as to avoid

the application later of any light colour over a dark one.

"The first painting is a thick impasto (as it is termed). If the composition is intricate I sometimes lay it in in monochrome, using Terra Vert and White, or Raw Umber and White—by which I mean Flake White, though occasionally, to increase the body of colour, I use Davy's Foundation White.

"In all cases I leave my first application to become thoroughly dry before retouching, for which purpose I expose what I have done to the strongest sunlight I can get, leaving my pictures for days, weeks, and even months, under such exposure, the glass house in the garden being built for this purpose.

"Before retouching any part, I am careful to have each picture washed with tepid water, and rubbed with a raw potato cut in half, the edges being carefully pared and rounded off to avoid scratching any part that would come in contact with the paint. This application of the potato is washed off with more clean water, and the picture is finally wiped with a soft cloth, and left to become thoroughly dry.

"By this method I am able to preserve something of the crispness of a first painting.

"I use colour as pure and unmixed as possible, very rarely using more than two colours together. The transparent colour is applied with as much body as the opaque colour—not glazing in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but removing

the colour that may be too strong with paper or rag (paper more frequently).

"When the colour has become so dry that it is not in a state to be displaced, I take a broad rhinoceros-horn palette knife and rub the whole over as if I were polishing it—this I know from experience makes the colour very hard.

"The method produces a very dry and dull surface which makes it difficult to know the exact tone of the darker colours, and necessitates a certain amount of oiling out. Chemists must decide which oil is best for the purpose. My own practice is to use a little poppy oil, and after the application to rub it all off as much as possible, so as to avoid a slippery surface.

"My palette is of the simplest :—

Flake White and occasionally Davy's Foundation White.[1]
Lemon Yellow.
Naples Yellow.
Aureolin.
Yellow Ochre.
Raw Sienna.
Light Red or Venetian.
Indian Red.
Vermilion (Chinese).
Rose Madder.
Rubens Madder.
Brown Madder.
Raw Umber.
Burnt Umber.

[1] Mr. Scott Taylor afterwards prepared a pigment which Mr. Watts greatly preferred to any other.

Burnt Sienna.
Burnt Terra Vert, called Verona Brown.
Ivory Black.
Blue Black.
Ultramarine and French Ultramarine (equally permanent).
Ultramarine Ash.
Cobalt.
Terra Vert.
Oxide of Chromium.
Emerald Green (always used pure and unmixed).

"These are what I habitually use. If I make an experiment, it is something outside my given practice, and need not be mentioned.

"All these colours are ground specially for me extra stiff, and are therefore kept in gallipots under water (which is changed every day) to prevent any evaporation of the small quantity of oil.

"The older my brushes are the better I like them. They have long handles, and I never use a mahl-stick.

"Instead of a palette the colours are arranged on a glass or marble slab, my practice being generally to walk up and down when I am painting.

"A small china palette I find convenient when I want finer work, and walking backwards and forwards is troublesome.

"I sometimes find it necessary to put on paint with a palette knife as it is stiff, and I move the paint into place with a stiff brush. For the

purpose of drawing a fine line or edge I find it necessary to dilute with Rock Oil (Messrs. John Bell & Co.'s preparation of Petrol), or sometimes with Rock Oil and Linseed Oil—the proportion being two-thirds of Rock Oil to one of Linseed.

"I very rarely use Orange Cadmium, as I find that Raw Sienna over a pure white ground, laid on thickly and then removed as necessary, will give all the brilliancy required.

"As I value the clear edge exceedingly, I am most careful never to smear one colour into another. There was no smear in painting until after the time of Van Dyck.

"Messrs. Winsor & Newton have a standing order to send me no colour that is in the least degree doubtful. I have never found any colour supplied by them show any kind of failure.

"The only failure in my work that has come to my knowledge has been occasionally that colour has scaled off. This has been attributed to an excess in the quality of absorbence in the preparation of the canvas, and for this reason oil was added to the preparation. I was early in direct communication with Mr. Newton, who was a good chemist, and in later years with Mr. Scott Taylor."

My husband often acknowledged his indebtedness to these gentlemen, especially the latter, and some hundreds of letters passed between them upon matters of permanency of colour, vehicles, etc.

On the completion of the fresco, Mr. H. C. Newton and others of his firm kindly sent my husband a case containing two bottles of cut-crystal, one of which held pure ultramarine and the other a rare madder. It was a New Year's gift for 1860, and the engraved inscription expressed the hope that he would long continue his noble exertions in the cause of modern art in England.

He occasionally used these valuable colours, but on the whole looked upon the little case with peculiar regard, and during the last days of his life mentioned to me the name of the young artist to whom he wished it to be sent as a memento.

One of the earliest letters to be found from Messrs. Winsor & Newton to Mr. Watts is upon the subject of the preparation of his canvas. It proves the careful thought bestowed by the painter and his colourman upon permanency in every respect. The letter is as follows :—

"It might perhaps be said that there is some danger in using sized canvas to paint upon in oil-colour. This would be the case if we suffered the size to remain on the surface so as to interpose a film of that substance between the canvas and the paint, but we avoid this danger by scraping away every portion of the size from the surface of the canvas with a sharp-edged trowel, and then rubbing the surface with stone rubbers, so that the size remains only between the threads, and none on the surface."

Even upon the matter of washing the surface of the pictures while in progress Mr. Newton was consulted, and wrote accordingly to approve of the use of the raw potato.

"CROUCH OAK, ADDLESTONE,
"SURREY, *July 28th*, 1878.

"DEAR SIR—In reply to your favour of the 26th just to hand, on the subject of your rubbing your pictures over with the juice of potatoes or of onions, I do not think it likely that any oil-colour, however delicate, could be damaged by so doing. But I think it just possible that the farina left on the surface of a picture might affect the gloss of the varnish that might be applied after the picture is finished, unless the superfluous fecula were washed off.

"I remember many years ago, when our firm made Copal Varnish on a large scale, being called upon by a decorative painter to whom we had supplied some varnish for varnishing oak graining to look at some work where the varnish had gone dull in parts and in streaks whilst the other part remained bright. This dulness had not, as I was informed, appeared until some months after the work had been done.

"It puzzled me very much to account for this singular appearance, but in closely enquiring into all the attendant circumstances I learnt that the oak graining had been done in oil-colour—but that the stripes and shading had been done in thin water-colour—and as there had been some

difficulty in getting the water-colour tints to lay on without freckling or 'sissing,' as it is termed, the grainer had mixed with the water-colours some of the finer parts of the farina of 'pea flour.'

"As pea flour farina resembles in its constituents that of the potato or onion, a similar effect might take place with any varnish subsequently used over it. Not that I think it would be any serious detriment.

"Thanks for the kind privilege of entering your sanctum; it has always possessed an unusual interest for me, from the circumstance of your evidently strong desire that your pictures should possess the enduring qualities that we find in the old masters—qualities that most artists desire, but few will take the care and go through laborious efforts to attain.

"If I can at any time be of any assistance in any technical detail I should greatly desire to do so, and distance would be no object, but I live at a distance of upwards of twenty miles from town in the direction of Guildford. This to a person of average endurance may be said to be as nothing, but to a man of seventy-four of rather feeble health and strength is an effort that knocks me up for some days when by an effort I have been obliged of necessity to undertake it. It follows, therefore, that I am not able to do much in the way of business, with the exception of bringing my many years of experience to bear when any emergency arises.

"Permit me now (as I may not have another opportunity) to thank you individually and in the name of my firm for the constant support and patronage you have bestowed on us for so many years, and permit me also to say that should there be any technical matters wherein I can be of any service, pray command me unreservedly.—I remain, Dear Sir, Yours faithfully,

"HENRY C. NEWTON.

"G. F. WATTS, R.A."

In answering this letter my husband wrote:—

"DEAR SIR—I must apologise for delaying so long to answer your interesting and instructive letter and thank you for so promptly sending me the information I asked for. I have been out of town, which must be my excuse. I think from what you say the potato may be safely used. I like the dulness produced by its application, which, I suppose, would be completely got rid of by repeatedly oiling or varnishing. I have but latterly come to the same conclusion you appear to have arrived at respecting the laying on of the colours. I am certain they should be applied as frankly as possible; what will not do should be removed, and replaced by fresh colour at the time, or allowed to dry thoroughly and be frankly repainted. No tormenting of the colour can result in good effects. I think, too, the colour should be used as dry as may be convenient, which will enable one to put it on crisply, the last painting being applied with

plenty of oil (poppy I think the best) or the whole picture well soaked with oil when finished to prevent it from perishing. I wish you would kindly give me your opinion on this mode of work. Of course, I mean with reference to the safety.—Yours very truly and obliged, G. F. WATTS."

To this Mr. Henry Newton replied as follows :—

"*August* 21*st*, 1878.

"DEAR SIR—I hardly know what to say about using oil of any sort uncombined with pigment, as would be the case if you rubbed oil over the picture after it was finished.

"Beyond all doubt poppy-seed oil is the purest and the least liable to turn yellow—but all oils more or less discolour as they become dry and hard. In fact, the theory is that they are no longer 'oils' but by absorbing 'oxygen' from the atmosphere are converted into resin.

"Our excellent friend, the late Thomas Unwin, R.A., got us to grind in water as finely as possible some 'pumice stone,' which was then dried in the air, powdered, and sifted through a fine sieve, and kept for use. After a picture had been painted a sufficiently long time to become hard, he laid the picture face upwards, and sprinkling over it a little of the fine pumice dust, with a soft pad and some water went over the surface of the picture with great care so that none of the glazings were injured, then washing

with water. By these means he considered that any oil that might have floated, however minute the quantity, would be removed. Now, although our friend might not in the present day be considered A1 as an artist, his works were delicately painted, and he was sensitively anxious that the purity of his tints should be preserved.

"I have all my life hoped to find some better vehicle than oil or any of its compounds, but I do not suppose I shall ever see a substitute in my day. . . .

"When at Florence and Bologna, whilst minutely examining the technique of oil-painting, it occurred to me that the secret of the wonderfully enduring lustre of the old masters lay in their solid tints being as little as possible mixed together, but each gradation was a distinct tint, the whole composed of minute differences laid side by side or driven into each other with as little mixing of the tints as possible.

"Of course, I refer to opaque or body tints only, upon which I should say permanency principally depends. Glazing tints must undoubtedly be glazed and softened.

"The copyists in the Italian Galleries never reckon upon this, but blend and tease one tint into another with but feeble results.

"The great clearness and brilliancy of the best specimens of the Gobelin tapestries, seem to me to be due in a great measure to the fact that in this art tints cannot be blended but must be laid side by side.

"There may be nothing in this idea but what is known to artists, but if so, very few seem to practise in this way, or it may be only one out of the many hundreds of suggestions only worth being relegated to the limbo of most other theories on art. It has, however, the negative merit of not taking long to read and burn."

On Mr. Newton's advice my husband gave up the use of Vandyck Brown, having been told that in its nature it was bituminous; and later, on the recommendation of Mr. Scott Taylor, he added Aurora Yellow, Mars Yellow, and Alizarin Lake to the range of his colours.

About 1860 he began to use a preparation of petroleum then called Benzine, as he had a great objection to turpentine as a medium for colour, and also because the smell affected his health. He continued to the end to use a preparation of petrol under various names, such as Rock Oil, Benzine, and Petroleum.

A difficulty arose through the use of these mat colours, and my husband turned to Mr. Scott Taylor for advice. "I have one trouble," he wrote, "with these colours which suit me so admirably. They dry so dead that I have great difficulty in knowing what I have really got, and often work over and over unnecessarily, and in the end fail to get what I want and might get to a great extent if I knew exactly the state of things. To oil or varnish is to lose a quality of ground most important. Water brings the colours together, but the

drying is too rapid. Now, is there anything I can use for the object which I think you will understand, something that will retain the gloss on the parts where the colour has sunk for a sufficient time to enable me to see what I am about? Will glycerine be unsafe? I don't like to try it, but you may be able to suggest some glutin that will amalgamate with such liquid colour as must be used where the tone is dark and rich. There ought to be something. Please think this over."

The use of glycerine was condemned, and the difficulty was finally overcome by a weak solution of mastic varnish in petroleum applied to the dark parts to restore temporarily their values, and this solution was occasionally made use of.

The preparation of the canvas had always been to Mr. Watts of paramount importance. He had used tempera in Italy, or perhaps, to be accurate, a distemper under painting to which oil-colour was afterwards applied.

I find by an old account with Messrs. Winsor & Newton that immediately after his return to London from Italy, and throughout the year of 1847, every canvas prepared for my husband is noted as being absorbent.

In 1892, as he had been questioned with regard to the preparation of his grounds, and the old correspondence with Mr. Newton, though still in his possession, had been put away out of sight and forgotten, I wrote on his behalf

to ask Messrs. Winsor & Newton whether any record had been kept, and received the following reply :—

"38 RATHBONE PLACE, W.,
"*July 28th*, 1892.

"DEAR MADAM—In reply to your wish to have record of the preparation of Mr. Watts's absorbent ground canvases, I find on reference to our old books that they were, I believe, in the first instance, prepared with Flour paste, Plaster of Paris, and Glue dissolved in water; afterwards Whiting soaked in water, and mixed with Patent size, Honey, and a small quantity of Pale Drying Oil, and recently Pale Cadmium Yellow (manufactured by ourselves) has been used to give the colour required.

"With regard to the preparation of the Panels, I cannot at present find a record of them, but our foreman in this department, who has been with us many years, is just now on his holiday, and the matter shall be enquired into on his return.—I am, Dear Madam, Yours respectfully,

"ROBERT W. THRUPP
"(for WINSOR & NEWTON, LTD.)."

The letter referred to, written in 1878, gives a still more precise account of these preparations :—

"38 RATHBONE PLACE, W.,
"*Feb. 26th*, 1878.

"DEAR SIR—The last canvases, referred to in your favour of the 21st, were prepared as we have prepared them before for you, and there-

fore with a certain proportion of paste. The cloth is sized and the size allowed to dry thoroughly. A preparation of plain paste and killed plaster of Paris is then used for surfacing. There is no fear whatever touching the cloth; that cannot be affected, especially through the size, by the very moderate quantity of paste used in the surface preparation. Nor would oil-colours be affected in any way that would be perceptible. Some water- or tempera-colours, however, might be affected in course of time, but to what material extent we cannot say, nor are there any means of determining. The paste goes brown, but the action and result are not likely to be apparent. After all, there is no 'body' of paste on the surface preparation. It is thinned with water, again brought weaker by the admixture of the plaster of Paris, and the combination is then again thinned and weakened by the addition of still more water.

"We have given the subject attention since the receipt of your favour and have consulted Professor Barff upon the matter. And this letter is the result. After all, the preparation is not one that we recognise as a business one, or that we have adopted in any way, so that we are lacking in the experience of time as to its properties.—We remain, Dear Sir, Yours faithfully and obliged,

"WINSOR & NEWTON.

"G. F. WATTS, R.A."

Upon the same subject in 1897 my husband wrote as follows to Mr. Scott Taylor :—

" Many years ago in your establishment were prepared for me under the direction of Mr. Newton some canvases of a bright yellow ground, very absorbent. I have had some much more recently, and I should like to know whether they have been prepared exactly from the old recipe. I got some effects on the ground in question of a very remarkable character, and should like to have some more canvases, say two or three of my head size for example, to try if I can obtain the old results. If the original recipe can be found I should be greatly obliged to you if you would kindly give some attention to the character of the material used, with reference to its safety. Why I gave it up was that I found, unless colours with considerable body were employed, there was a disposition to leave the ground; probably because the materials in the ground destroyed the oil. Could this be so ? "

To this Mr. Scott Taylor replies, giving the recipes already quoted in much greater detail. They fell short of the first ten years, and my husband writes : " I beg to return my best thanks for your kindness in taking so much trouble in looking up the records with reference to the grounds. I see the earliest is July 1857, but the picture 'Life's Illusions' was painted immediately on my return from Italy, which was early in the summer of 1847. I think you

are right about the too great absorbency, and should be inclined to prefer yellow ochre on account of its greater body; excessive brilliancy of colour being unnecessary as the picture would be put in with very solid colour; but however solid the colour of the painting, I have always found the colour of the ground will have an influence, and have consequently always painted on a very pure white or bright light colour, and believe this to be very important."

The records, Mr. Scott Taylor wrote, did not go further back than 1857; he adds: "I gather, however, from a memorandum of Mr. Newton's that they were composed of whiting, yellow ochre, and size, and did not differ materially from those prepared at the above date." In a subsequent letter he adds, "I find that a little honey was added in years gone by to give elasticity. This I disapprove of, as it renders the ground more susceptible, I think, to the influence of damp. I have substituted some very fat poppy oil for the honey, as I consider this will impart the requisite elasticity in a much safer way."

The permanency of colour was naturally a matter of great interest to my husband, and to him in 1879 Mr. Arthur H. Newton thus writes:—

"The stability of most colours depends in a great degree upon the way in which they are applied. For instance, if colours are much diluted either with medium or oil or white

they are more liable to fade and change than if used in their intensity or full strength. Carmine is a case in point, for although a weak tint of it either as a thin glaze or diluted with white will not long preserve its pinky freshness, yet when employed in the power of its pure and strong tint will stand unimpared in beauty for many years, still as a permanent and transparent crimson or carmine, the madders are unrivalled for permanency either in their diluted or undiluted state." As time went on Mr. Watts seemed to require his colour to be more and more stiffly ground. In 1896 he writes to Mr. Scott Taylor: "It is my practice to use my pigments as stiff as I can get them on to the canvas. This may endanger their permanence, so it is necessary to give them some sustenance afterwards. But I imagine they might be ground in fatter oil; will you kindly give me your opinion?

"I paint on a very absorbent ground, sometimes prepared at home with size and plaster (well and long soaked); upon this, in order to preserve the absorbent quality, I use my colours as stiff as I can drive them on, and unless they have sufficiently adhesive quality from the character of the oil in which they are ground, it seems to me that they may be in danger of perishing. I should be much obliged to you for your opinion on the subject; if I am right I will ask you kindly to have prepared for me some Naples Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Burnt

Umber, ground stiff and with very fat oil, and sent in gallipots.

"Using my colours as described, my pictures become very flat and dim, especially as I paint over and over, always allowing what has been done to dry most thoroughly before being worked upon; they therefore require oiling out to enable me to see what I have really done. For this purpose I think the beautiful oils you have sent me admirably adapted; liquid and pure as they seem to be, they ought to sink through my dry pigments and bind the whole together. . . . One result of my method is that the pictures painted fifty years ago are still as clear and fresh (they seem to me to be clearer) as the day they were painted. The only question is that of danger from dryness."

To this Mr. Scott Taylor replies: "Your method of painting, as you describe it to me, appears an excellent one. I imagine that Van Eyck himself proceeded upon somewhat similar lines; for I have always understood that, while his pictures bear intrinsic evidence of having been constructed with thick and flowing vehicles, yet the delicacy of their execution is incompatible with the use of such materials. I have therefore often supposed that his under painting was carried out somewhat in your fashion and that his thick and flowing media were put on and absorbed afterwards."

The grinding of the colours in such very fat oil was a matter of considerable difficulty, but

both artist and chemist were convinced that it was conducive to "unusual permanence." Mr. Scott Taylor feared they might be very difficult to use, but to this Mr. Watts replies (October 1896): "I thank you for the colours which you have been at the trouble of having prepared; they suit me perfectly, and I only wish I had had them years ago. No doubt they would be found rather unmanageable generally, but long habit of using my colours as stiff as I could get them has prepared me for these." Still later Mr. Scott Taylor writes: "In reply to yours dated the 23rd, I am very glad to hear that the specially prepared oil-colours are growing in your appreciation. I prepare them always myself on a small model-mill which I have had fitted up in one of the ante-rooms of my laboratory here, and so naturally I take a great interest in them." After a trial of two years Mr. Watts writes again: "The colours ground specially for me have most admirable qualities far beyond any others I have used. With them Reynolds would have been able to produce all the solid and splendid effects, in many of which his works stand quite alone, without the use of wax which undoubtedly he did employ and without the disastrous consequences which few of his pictures have escaped. I believe in competent hands that the noblest effects might be produced with those specially ground colours and with the certainty of safety." In 1901, three years later, the colour at Mr. Watts's request was less finely

ground. He had said that for laying in the pictures he liked "to feel the *grit*, though for finishing and fine work the smoother the colours are the better." And Mr. Scott Taylor replied :—

"I quite agree with what you say about grinding colours too finely. It has for a very long time been my opinion that in many cases modern colours have all the life taken out of them by being ground perfectly smooth and buttery, and that in this way most precious qualities of pigments are now lost; but I can never get anybody to listen to me.

"I feel quite sure that the Venetians knew the value of rough colour in giving richness and glow, by the play of light round small particles of pigment (not crushed out of existence beneath an artist colourman's Juggernaut cars!) and by the optical blending which takes place when the work is viewed at the proper distance. It seems to me that the consistent use of smoothly ground colour must necessarily result in a certain monotony and insipidity of effect, and I should not be surprised if modern impressionism is not to some extent an unconscious reaction against this tendency.

"My own notion is that there is a certain degree of fineness or coarseness—a certain grain so to speak—at which each pigment looks its best, and which varies, of course, immensely with different pigments."

The colours so ground were so entirely satisfactory that Mr. Watts sometimes exclaimed

during the last working days of his life, "I declare I am just beginning to know how to paint."

His interest in tempera also revived, and in 1901 he writes to Mr. Scott Taylor: "I don't know whether it is worth your while to give any attention to tempera medium. Tempera is now coming into use; it is the next best thing to fresco for mural decoration, and indeed for all work of a monumental character. When I began to paint, I used to put my design on the canvas with distemper, and I much prefer the quality. I discontinued the practice, finding that the oil pigment did not adhere perfectly on some occasions, but what I painted in Italy never failed. I don't know what the difference in the material or preparation is, or if it is, as I say, worth your while to consider the matter. I certainly should like to return to my old method if the preparation could be made safe, especially for large pictures. It is, I think, absolutely certain that Tintoretto and Veronese either painted their pictures with this material and oiled them over, or having progressed with the water-colour finished with oil-colours: the rapid broad *wash* of colour with oil being made liquid enough to run." Again in 1903 he writes: "I do not want tempera, which I know is an egg medium, but the distemper used by scene-painters, as I think I said, in the theatres as a preparation. This was certainly used by Paul Veronese, as it is not possible otherwise to get

over such large spaces rapidly. In the Tate Gallery you may see a picture I painted in Italy in distemper (the story from Boccaccio), working several times on the distemper. It is, I believe, perfectly sound, and here in my gallery you may see a picture ('Echo') painted in the same way in the year 1846, so it cannot be said that the practice is an unsafe one. The egg tempera would not do for the large designs I contemplate."

Mr. Scott Taylor, who kindly looked through these foregoing pages with great care, wrote when returning them to me as follows :—

"I should like to say with regard to the concluding paragraph on distemper groundwork, that the notion of Mr. Watts making an incursion into the domain of such an 'old forgotten far-off thing' as the composite method of painting in oil on a distemper substratum, with Messrs. Winsor & Newton as his aiders and abettors, caused me considerable anxiety. There was no record of the preparation of colours of this sort in the archives of the firm, and it would, for one thing, have been hardly consistent with Mr. Watts's reiterated adjurations to us to send him nothing which we could not guarantee for lasting qualities ('even if I ask for it') were we to have supplied him with distemper paints without knowing the best methods of making them for his particular purpose. For scene-painting, *qua* scene-painting, it would not have mattered in the least, but to prepare them as a ground for oil-colour with the old traditions and experience

Alfred inciting the Saxons to resist the Danes

of the best means of securing proper adhesion lost in the mist of several hundred years would only have been courting disaster.

"I mention this because, while agreeing absolutely with Mr. Watts as to the general principles which should govern the pursuit of knowledge, I gather from a passage in one of his last letters to me that I had led him to believe I took no interest in distemper groundwork. 'I suppose' he writes, June 27, 1903, 'the principle of the division of labour is a good one, but I cannot help thinking that the more we know, especially about things in any way connected with our particular line of occupation, the better.'

"This passage is so characteristic both as an expression of opinion and a gentle rebuke that I think you might well have woven it into the texture of your notes."

III

NOTES BY G. F. WATTS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON EDITED AND COMPILED BY TOM TAYLOR[1]

In the third volume of these *Memoirs* Mr. Tom Taylor in his estimate of Haydon as an artist writes :—

"I was fortunate enough, in some of my examinations of Haydon's pictures, to be accompanied by a friend[2] who combines the artist's knowledge of technical means and eye for imitative detail with that large appreciation of aims and intentions in which the criticism of artists is often deficient. His judgment, moreover, is that of one sympathising in many respects with Haydon, and cheerfully recognising his services as an earnest and eloquent advocate of the claims of high art on the Government and the public. I claim, therefore, all respect for the opinions of

[1] Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1853, 1st edition.

[2] Mr. G. F. Watts, the designer of the Cartoon of Caractacus, and the painter of Alfred encouraging the Saxons to pursue the Danes, which respectively gained premiums of the first class in the Westminster Hall competitions of 1843 and 1847.

one whom I know to be conscientious, as I believe him to be competent, and to whom I wish here to express my thanks for the use he has allowed me to make of his communication, which expresses, in the main, what I myself feel on the subject."

"I am afraid," Mr. Watts writes, "you will think I have forgotten the promise I made to give you my opinion on the characteristics of Haydon's art. But the fact is, I find it very difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. Sympathising sincerely with him in his views upon art to their utmost extent, naturally inclined to appreciate the qualities he aims at, and doing full justice to the power and amount of knowledge displayed, I am surprised to find how little I am really affected by his works, and how difficult it is to retain any very distinct impression of them. This corroboration of public opinion in my own feelings I have been endeavouring to account for. When any qualities beyond common experience and knowledge, and above the most ordinary comprehension, are aimed at, the public estimate can only be valuable when it has received the fiat of time; but when the first difficulty has been got over, and the public interested, it is rare that what is really good has failed to maintain its place.

"I think we shall find, upon examination, that all art which has been really and permanently successful has been the exponent of some great principle of mind or matter—the illustration of some great truth—the translations of some

paragraph out of the book of nature. If Haydon read therein and strove to expound the lesson, he read too hastily to understand fully, and did not, like Demosthenes, take pains to perfect a defective utterance. His art is defective in principle and wanting in attractiveness—not sufficiently beautiful to please—not possessing those qualities of exact imitation which attract, amuse, give confidence, and even flatter, because they, in a manner, take the spectator into partnership, and make him feel as if they were almost suggestions of his own. This is what I have seen, and what I would do, if I had time to paint; *anch' io son pittore.*

"The characteristics of Haydon's art appear to me to be great determination and power, knowledge and effrontery. I cannot find that he strikes upon any chord that is the basis of a true harmony. The art of Pheidias translated and expressed perfection of form in its full dignity and beauty; that of Angelico, Perugino, Francia, and Raphael religion; that of Michael Angelo the might of imagination; the greater of the Venetians were the exponents of the power of nature in its rich harmony of colour; Correggio is all sweetness; Tintoretto is the Michael Angelo of colour and effect; Rubens is profuse and generous as autumn; and, if he is sometimes slovenly, he is so jovial and high-spirited that one forgives everything.

"All these, and many others, worked with earnestness and conscientiousness. Absolute truth, in combination with abstract qualities, or

without them, will always successfully appeal to the spectator's intelligence. Haydon seems to me to have succeeded as often as he displays any real anxiety to do so; but one is struck with the extraordinary discrepancy of different parts of his work, as though, bored by a fixed attention that had taken him out of himself, yet highly applauding the result, he had daubed and scrawled his brush about in a sort of intoxication of self-glory. . . .

"I have pointed out all the things that strike me as errors, because I know that you fully appreciate the greater qualities, as I do, and because many of these defects you will fairly ascribe to the unfavourable conditions of his life. His first great work, the 'Solomon,' appears to me to be, beyond all comparison, his best. It is far more equal than anything else I have seen, very powerful in execution, and fine in colour. I think he has lowered the character of Solomon by making him half a joker, but the whole has, at least, the dignity of power. Too much praise cannot, I think, be bestowed on the head of Lazarus; and in the absence of such important evidence as the 'Entry into Jerusalem' would afford, it is hardly fair to pass judgment.

"It is somewhat remarkable that the only man who can be said to have formed a school in England after the manner of the Italian artists is perhaps the only artist of any eminence who has had no imitators."

And the editor adds: "I believe that this

criticism points out, honestly and accurately, the defects of Haydon's art, taking for granted, rather than expressing, its countervailing beauties."

Mr. Watts rarely undertook the rôle of critic, and adverse criticism was a task which was never agreeable to him. He wrote soon after the publication of the first edition of the *Memoirs* to Sir Charles Eastlake :—

"I take this opportunity of expressing to you, an old and staunch friend of Mr. Haydon's, my regret that some remarks of mine have been printed in his autobiography, which being intended to suggest points for consideration and to lead to subsequent conversations upon the merits of Mr. Haydon as an artist, dwell almost exclusively upon his defects. These criticisms must, I fear, especially under the peculiar circumstances, seem illiberal and indelicate. In addition to my unwillingness to assume a character I can have no right to, I deeply regret saying anything that could possibly give pain either to relations or friends of a man sincere and ardent in his views, whose misfortunes I lament and for whose talents and objects I have in many particulars the greatest respect."

A second edition of the autobiography was soon called for, and Mr. Tom Taylor begged Mr. Watts to contribute some additional pages. As these remarks by the painter bear upon art more generally, and less directly upon particular pictures by Haydon, than those contributed to the first edition, they are here

quoted in full. Mr. Tom Taylor thus prefaces them:—

"Since the first edition of these *Memoirs* appeared, I have received from Mr. Watts the following remarks, which have a close bearing on the subject of Haydon's relations to the public men of his time, and the question with which he was so possessed—the employment of artists on works of art at the public expense. The remarks of Mr. Watts are so full of matter for thought, and state so fairly and guardedly the obstacles in the way of any artist desirous of working in the most imaginative and elevated paths of his art, that I insert them without abbreviation. They contain answers to questions which can hardly fail to have been suggested to many by perusal of the *Memoirs* of Haydon, and they furnish a practical suggestion on a subject which every day is becoming one of more interest—the function of art in popular education, and the means of employing it for the purpose of national teaching."

"Whilst the defects of Haydon's style may be more or less obvious to all, it must also be obvious that in him was wasted an enormous amount of working power; and in connection with this point we may well be permitted to regret that practical England feels no natural love of art excepting that of the imitative kind. It may be true that good excise laws and a good police are more necessary to the welfare of the

nation than painting and sculpture, but patriots and statesmen alike forget that the time will come when the want of great art in England will produce a gap sadly defacing the beauty of our whole national structure. Setting aside the present practical value of art as a means of general instruction and improvement—when all shall be a question of history, every possession and every want of our country will become matter of national perfection or national deformity. Pendants in art to the great names in literature will be sparingly found; nor is this to be attributed to want of talent, but want of opportunity. It was not, perhaps, to be expected that either Lord Grey or Lord Melbourne could make any serious attempts to carry out Haydon's views; yet had they shown themselves more sensible of the general reasonableness of the broad principle, their claims to respect for comprehensiveness of mind would have been increased. First-rate materials were certainly in Haydon's case neglected, and one cannot help thinking that means of employing them might have been found. Working, for example, as an historian to record England's battles, he would, no doubt, have produced a series of mighty and instructive pictures, being a powerful draughtsman and a conscientious student of costume and historical details. The heroic, the indomitable, and the enthusiastic would have found in him a congenial illustrator. Certainly that success which is to be achieved by audacity must have been his; and

the greatness of the undertaking, satisfying a mind that was always craving after the important, would have purged it of its vanity and left it free to its sounder workings. Self must have been forgotten if only for want of time to remember it.

"The modern artist may justly lay claim to all the advantages that can possibly be afforded him in the production of works that from their character and aim will be compared, both unconsciously and intentionally, with the splendid creations of the old masters. With reference to the things themselves there is no unfairness in such comparison; but in transferring praise or blame from the work to the workman, it should be remembered that the conditions of modern times and northern climates are eminently unfavourable to the artist, not to lay stress upon the most important fact, that such works must in this country grow entirely out of the artist's desire to do something great—a stimulus that even in the most ardent mind may be weakened by difficulty, and destroyed by want of sympathy and inconsiderate criticism. Under the influence of these the working out of his designs will demand in the English artist of our own day an amount of exertion unknown to the old masters; and in place of which they had but the delightful and, to the dexterous artist, easy task of imitation. In the nineteenth century, and in the grey North, he who would paint an ancient subject or treat grandly an abstract one finds himself entirely without artistic materials; and

he must either invent or imitate what he has seen done by others. Even the human form is so shut up and hidden on ordinary occasions that it is only displayed to the artist under false conditions, and seems to him, and is in fact, unnatural in its appearance. In Italy to this day, though gorgeous costume no longer contributes its magnificence to the general splendour, one constantly sees forms and combinations that might be adopted, without alteration, in the grandest composition. That the harmonious and glowing effects produced by the old masters, possess a degree of truth and power rarely or never found in modern art is not surprising, as they were in fact copies of reality, not seen now and then and upon great occasions, but as often as the artist left his painting-room. No doubt nature is always the same; similar impulses have actuated mankind for good and evil from the earliest times until now, and the laws which regulate the outward indications of that which is within are alike general and invariable. But as art, whose means of expression are combinations of line, colour, and contrast, cannot be independent of the beautiful, the splendid, and the various, the whole range of conditions in modern England presents to the artist who would produce the gorgeous, the splendid, and the impressive (in effect) about as much the aspect of nature as does the Dutch garden with trees clipt into the forms of peacocks and vases. To the painter of actualities the

materials are ever available and good. There is nothing to prevent the perfect success of another Hogarth. The details of everyday life and the police courts, looked at from a philosophical point of view, furnish subjects perhaps superior, certainly more affecting, than the majority of those treated by the earlier painters. But still the beautiful, the dignified, and the glowing form part of our natural wants, and cannot be given up without regret. As long as painting shall be practised we shall find men like Haydon pining after something which they know of and feel, but cannot see. A visit to sunny climates would have afforded Haydon many a valuable lesson. There he would have seen the unrestrained form acquiring that development he could but imagine and might be excused for exaggerating—the rich colour of the flesh that gives at once the key-note of the picture—the out-of-door life so suggestive of breadth and brilliancy.

"Tired with conventionality, a more healthy state of feeling is doubtless leading us back to nature in art; but there is some danger of falling into the extremes ever consequent upon revolution. There is now a tendency to imagine that truth consists solely in the imitation of details, forgetting that many such details are natural only in a secondary degree. Deformities, pimples, warts, etc., are natural inasmuch as they are formed in existing circumstances as natural consequences of certain conditions; but they

have nothing whatever to do with the primary, sublime principles of nature that are based upon perfection and beauty. Reality is not always nature; but a desire to be true will always, if earnestly acted upon, lead to great things and receive sympathy. With the principles of Pre-Raffaelitism Haydon would probably have had little fellow-feeling, even whilst appreciating, as he was fully capable of doing, the merits of its productions. His mind was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the decorative and the comprehensive, and had an impression of something the imitation of everyday nature could not give him, and which often produced unreality when he wished to be truthful. He could paint a pewter pot and a bottle admirably, because he had no impressions of them at variance with the actual appearance; but he usually failed utterly in modern costume, preconceived notions of flowing drapery interfering with his perception of reality. Yet his theory is almost invariably admirable, and his remarks upon nature acute and just; nor can it be doubted that, though perhaps over anxious to be the prophet of a new creed respecting the application of art to public purposes, he was sincere in his desire to bring about this important object; nor is there any reason to believe, had his own love of fame been gratified by success, that he would have grudged employment and success to others. On the contrary, his Journal proves that he was capable, not only of appreciating the merit of a contemporary, but

also of active personal exertion to bring that merit before the public; and it must unfortunately be confessed that such generosity is rare, and should receive its meed of applause. Whether in his badgering of ministers, appeals to the public, and attacks upon institutions, he mistook the means only as far as his own conduct was concerned, or whether the mistakes extended down to and through his principles (always admitting the justness of his opinion that art should be introduced into public buildings), may be fairly questioned. Under the auspices of one whose remarkable desire to promote the art and sciences, and indeed the public welfare in every direction, and whose active personal exertions, fully seconding his good intentions, call for national admiration and confidence, many of Haydon's views are now being carried out in the New Houses of Parliament. But it is by no means clear, although many opportunities may be given to individuals, and many excellent works produced, that art itself will thus receive any very great impulse. The work must progress slowly; the public will seldom see it when completed; no artist who has not conquered a certain amount of public estimation, and who consequently is not confirmed in his style, views, manner, etc., can hope to be employed. Now, as one avowed intention of those who promote the work is the creation of a national school of art, and the awakening of a national sense of art, it may not be impertinent to enquire whether the

object would not be more rapidly and effectually attained by familiarising the public with works of art in such a manner that their absence would be felt as a want, so that a bare wall would become an unsightly object? A desire to return to the earnestness of the artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has already done much; and we might carry the principle still further, not by affecting the artistic ignorance of those periods, but by encouraging a race of workmen who, growing up in happy indifference to the critic, and in ignorance of the consuming desire to astonish, might become great unconsciously. Such a state of things, though no longer existing naturally, might perhaps be stimulated and engrafted upon actual conditions. Why should not the Government of a mighty country undertake the decoration of all the public buildings, such as town halls, national schools, and even railway stations? The trustees and officers of such buildings would, no doubt, readily consent, provided it were understood they were to incur no expense; and the Schools of Design and Royal Academy could furnish numbers of young men sufficiently advanced and sufficiently unspoiled to carry out, under direction, simply and impressively, designs that might be supplied by competition or taken from standard works. The honoured name of Flaxman might be invoked—a name much more honoured by strangers than by his own countrymen, who have so much reason to be proud of him: his

exquisite designs, painted on a large scale, either in chiaroscuro or in a monochromatic style, would do more to form a pure taste and correct judgment than any works perhaps that have ever appeared. Or, regarding the project merely as a means of bringing out latent talent and improving taste, and considering walls as slates whereon the schoolboy writes his figures, the great productions of other times might be reproduced, if but to be rubbed out when fine originals could be procured: for the expense would, in reality, if the thing were properly managed, very little exceed that of whitewashing. It would be a good deed to rescue from oblivion many great works that may soon cease to exist. There are many noble efforts of human genius that are fast going to destruction under the inevitable effects of damp and years, and many which any day may be destroyed by convulsions and revolutions, even though time could spare. No engraving can adequately render the effect of a large and magnificently coloured composition. Why should not the works of great artists be thus republished? No one will seriously attempt to urge that the reproduction of such works will be sufficient to form great artists, any more than the reprinting of the *Iliad* or *Paradise Lost* will make poets. But, besides the object of making these grand creations known to the public in something like their original power and splendour, the effort would demand of the workman an exercise of his faculties in a very different form from any which

is required in mere copying, and would act very much like the training that produced the results in other countries and times still so deservedly admired. Before the artist can express his ideas he must perfect himself in the language he uses. It is a natural language—a mother tongue—to him, it is true, and only presents great difficulties because his means of study are so dependent upon, and so much influenced by, external circumstances. These external conditions, commencing with a more intellectual character in the demand for art, are exactly what the modern artist wants. It would be remarkable indeed if a nation so distinguished in other branches of intellectual expression should be deficient in one which is so nearly related both to literature and science.

"If the existence of such a deficiency be asserted, the singular amount of talent displayed by English amateurs would prove the contrary. Whatever shortcomings may be fairly alleged must therefore be otherwise accounted for, and may be ascribed to certain evident reasons—such as the early necessity of making an effect by superficial qualities, precluding in the young artist attention to his general cultivation and improvement—the absence of demand for works of grave intellectual character on a large scale; for practice on a large scale is necessary to give comprehensiveness of thought and power of hand, until the mind be familiarised with such undertakings completed and in progress—the habit of painting to catch the public eye, and

consequently following the fashion and taste instead of rising above the one and improving the other—and last, not least, the influence of bad criticism. From these unfavourable influences the rising race of artists might be rescued by giving such of the most promising students of art as might be willing to engage themselves as workmen, missions as historians and public instructors. There is no reason the young artist should not paint pictures for exhibition and sale on the walls of the Royal Academy; but there is every reason he should be emancipated from unconditional dependence upon the incongruous competition and hasty judgment to which the annual exhibition subjects him. The demand for pictorial instructors is evident from the enormous number of illustrated publications that daily issue from the press, and the avidity with which they are purchased. Could the experiment of instructing by means of art be tried on an impressive scale, the popularity and success would probably exceed all expectation. If, for example, on some convenient wall the whole line of British sovereigns were painted—mere monumental effigies, well and correctly drawn, with strict regard to costume and details, careful avoidance of meretricious effect and everything that would destroy simplicity and intelligibility, and corrupt taste, with date, length of reign, remarkable events, etc., written at the side or underneath, three worthy objects at least would be attained—valuable and intellectual exercise

to the artist, highly interesting decoration to the space, and instruction to the public. Subjects of the noblest kind and infinite in variety will readily suggest themselves.

"A national school of art must be the result of a national want and a national taste. Both may be created by accustoming the mind and eye to the short road to knowledge, and the interest of the method of instruction. It would, therefore, be most advisable to begin at the beginning, and that designs intended for public instruction and artistic training should be of that purely historical and simple monumental character before suggested. It is unreasonable to expect that men already in possession of distinction will consent to become the mere workmen wanted, or that they can give up the commercial advantages of reputation; besides, habits of minds and manners of seeing things become confirmed quite as much as bones and muscles, and after a certain time of life cannot be successfully called upon to perform unusual operations.

"Young minds and young hands are required, especially for fresco, the material unquestionably best adapted to mural decoration and most important as a discipline. Granted that the most beautiful and various effects can only be represented in oil, the fresco painter is always able to use the medium, and all the better for the course of study absolutely necessary to enable him to paint in fresco, which demands a

thorough knowledge of his profession in its widest range. As the effects to be obtained are few and simple, the work must depend for success more upon the intellectual and less upon the sensuous. As the painter cannot depend upon successive repaintings, accidental effects, and working up—as errors cannot be disguised by smartness and defects smudged into the vagueness of the background—all must be honest and true. He must know exactly what he intends to do; his picture must be, so to speak, completed before he begins to paint; and such a picture, being the result of calculation, becomes scientific in its nature, demanding habits of thought greatly to the improvement, as must be obvious, of the intellect. No system that could be invented would be so calculated to counteract the peculiar errors always laid to the charge of the English school. Fresco is also inexpensive with regard to the materials, and must be rapid of execution. A few isolated works of art, however excellent, and whether on wall or canvas, cannot be expected to create a public want or public taste. In order to bring about an extended improvement and increase desire for it, art must find its way everywhere. All who go to Italy must be struck with evidence how entirely it entered into all the ordinary requirements of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. The naturally favourable conditions of those and earlier periods might be artificially produced to a very great extent;

and the results, taking root, might hereafter flourish with natural vigour. Under judicious management, and with an army of workmen, there would be no great difficulty in bringing about such a consummation; and certainly larger sums than would be required have been expended, and are still likely to be expended, upon objects far less national and important. These ideas, though crude and submitted with all deference, may not be entirely out of place at the end of this Autobiography, embodying in many respects similar views to those so often advocated in it. With regard to the letter printed in the first edition, and of which these remarks are a continuation, should any observations appear, considering the peculiar circumstances, wanting in delicacy and little indulgent as criticisms, the writer begs to explain that they were but intended by him for private suggestions of points for the critics' consideration; and that, expressing his willingness to be quoted, he did not contemplate appearing in public in the character of a critic. If in that character any of his remarks should have annoyed friends or relations of the late Mr. Haydon, he desires hereby to express his sincere regret."

Satan calling up his Legions
by G. F. Watts R.A. O.M. 1849-50
from a sketch for a design not carried farther

IV

ROYAL ACADEMY COMMISSION[1]

Minutes of Evidence

G. F. Watts, Esq., *examined.*

CHAIRMAN. During the practice of your profession as an artist in London, no doubt you have had occasion to consider frequently the position of the Academy?

Yes, I have.

Has it appeared to you that it might in any manner be made more conducive to the interests of art than at present?

Certainly. In the first place, I think it might be the means of instructing students, which duty it seems to me to neglect altogether. I entered when very young, I do not remember the year, but, finding that there was no teaching, I very soon ceased to attend.

You ceased to be a pupil on that distinct ground, that the teaching was not, as you thought, satisfactory?

[1] Minutes of evidence given by G. F. Watts before the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the fine arts (1863).

Exactly so; I thought there was no teaching whatever.

Did you try it for a long time?

No, a very short time, but long enough to satisfy myself that I could learn quite as much without attending the Academy, and with more ease to myself.

What were the principal points of defect that occurred to you?

In the first place, the absolute want of instruction. Then there was no test, no examination of the pupils.

Have you followed out the subject so far as to be able to say whether any of the defects which you then observed have since been removed?

No; I believe many improvements have been made in the Royal Academy, but I have not heard of any in the system of teaching in the antique school, where the pupils learn the beginning of art, that is to say, the drawing of the human figure, which is the most important of all.

You think the instruction in the antique school very important on that account?

Yes; but I think it is defective altogether except in so far as it affords facilities by the possession of specimens of sculpture for the students to draw there; as far as I know, the Keeper of the antique school does now, as he did then—merely walk round every day and point out a defect in the limb of the Apollo, for

instance, saying that it is too long, or too short, or too much bent; but that would never teach the student to draw a limb from another figure. I think he should point out that particular fault, at the same time calling attention to the principles of proportion, and demonstrating the action of the muscles. I think the living figure should be constantly present, and put into various attitudes, so that agreement or difference between nature and the antique might be studied.

Do you mean that you would amalgamate the painting school with the life school?

No; but I certainly would teach the antique in combination with the living model. I would demonstrate the action of the limbs and the use of the muscles from the living model, in combination with the antique. It is impossible to learn much about the human form by merely drawing the figure in a set position.

You are aware that the system of the Royal Academy in the different schools is to have a succession of visitors. It has been contended, on the one hand, that this secures to the pupil the advantage of the enlightenment of several distinguished painters one after the other; and, on the other hand, some persons maintain that a permanent teacher would give more fixity in his system of teaching, and be of greater benefit. Have you considered which of those two systems you would prefer?

I have hardly turned my attention to that,

22805

but perhaps a succession of visitors might be rather advantageous.

Do you see any advantage in retaining the present distinction in the Academy between the rank of Associates and that of full Academicians?

No; I think as far as I have turned my attention to it there is no advantage in it; on the contrary, I think there are many disadvantages.

You would, therefore, in our Academy, as is, I believe, the case in all foreign Academies, elect any gentleman deemed worthy of the honour to the full privilege of an Academician in the first instance?

Yes. I am not acquainted with foreign Academies, but I rather think that that is the case.

You are aware of the regulation by which each candidate for admission into the Royal Academy is required to put down his name as such. Do you think there is an objection to that?

I think it is vexatious and unnecessary. I think that if it were a very great distinction to belong to the Royal Academy any man would overcome his repugnance to it; but as the matter stands I think it is totally unnecessary. Certainly, I know within the range of my own personal acquaintance that it has been felt to be very disagreeable to many men.

Has it occurred to you whether the number of the Academy might be advantageously altered, whether an increase of the number might take

place, more especially if the class of Associates were dispensed with?

I think that is a difficult question. If it is to be a great distinction indeed, I think the number too great; but if it is merely to include all men who have a fair right to recognition, the number is not large enough.

Would you desire to see the Academy, as at present, represent the main branches of art—sculpture, painting, and architecture; or would you prefer the Academy to be merely for painting, leaving the other branches to other institutions?

I would connect them together; the more they are connected together the better for art in general. I think it most important that students should be encouraged to study the whole range of art as much as possible; that it even should be made a positive condition on admission that they should do so.

If the branches are combined it follows, of course, that there must be a larger number of members than if only one single branch, that of painting, is represented in the Academy?

Certainly.

Have you frequently exhibited pictures at the Royal Academy?

For a certain time I discontinued it altogether, being abroad, and afterwards for some years I did not contribute; but within the last four or five years I have been a pretty regular contributor.

Have you been generally satisfied with the manner in which pictures for exhibition have been selected, or have you seen any cause, speaking generally, to complain of it?

No; I think it extremely difficult, and in fact, considering the limited space, impossible, to give satisfaction; it is exceedingly difficult to judge with absolute justice; I do not think that there is any reasonable fault to be found; on the contrary, I think that latterly, within the last three or four years, there has been a great disposition evinced to do justice.

Do you think that you can suggest any fairer mode of selecting pictures for the exhibition than that which now exists, namely, a committee chosen by the Academy itself?

The only mode I could suggest would be the introduction of some element from without. I think I have heard it suggested that there should be certain lay members on the Academy council; I think that that would be very advantageous in representing the opinion from without, and that it would be free from the prejudice which must always exist in an assembly of professional men.

Do you limit that remark merely to the question which I last put, namely, as to the selection of pictures, or do you desire to extend it to the entire management of the Academy?

I think that it would be an advantage to make its application general; I cannot see that

there would be any disadvantage in doing so, and it appears to me that there would be many advantages.

Do you not think that it might be distasteful to the artists themselves?

I do not see why it should be; I do not think that any artist paints his pictures for his brother artists only; they are to be judged of by men of intellect.

LORD ELCHO. Supposing it was distasteful to artists, does it necessarily follow that it would be a bad thing for art?

I do not see any reason why it should.

CHAIRMAN. Have any other points occurred to you in which you think alteration for the better might be made in the Royal Academy?

It is very difficult to point out how the Academy might be improved, and I have not given very much attention to the subject; but considering the position which the Royal Academy holds, it has displayed very great apathy. I do not see its influence on our architecture, our street architecture, our fashions, or our taste in general, in any way whatever. The only national school which has grown up at all has grown up outside the Academy, and indeed in opposition to it—that is the water-colour school; and the only definite reform movement (which the Pre-Raffaellite school may be called) was certainly not stimulated by the Royal Academy, and even met with opposition from it.

You ascribe the fact which you have mentioned to some defect in the Royal Academy ?

It seems to me that there must be some defect. If they were extremely anxious to develop taste, or to encourage art, I think that some means would have been found. A merchant finds means if he wants to improve his commercial arrangements ; whatever a man wishes to do he finds a way of doing it more or less satisfactorily. But I do not see that the Royal Academy has done anything whatever. I must beg to say, in making these remarks, that personally I have no kind of feeling against the Royal Academy. Many of the members, whom I have the honour to be acquainted with, I esteem very much indeed, they have always displayed to me very great consideration, and indeed kindness ; and as I never was a candidate for the honour I cannot say that I have ever been overlooked, and I have not the smallest personal feeling of any kind against them.

With regard to the direction of public taste, might not some other instances be given besides that of the water-colour school, in which public taste has received a new impulse and direction independently of the Academy ? Might not, for instance, fresco painting be mentioned ?

I might have said, certainly, that what the late Prince Consort did the Royal Academy ought to have done many years before ; and also, it appears to me, that much might have been done by them when they have seen really promis-

ing work produced towards encouraging the artist to pursue the same course. I was very much struck at the International Exhibition last summer by a large picture by Etty, which I think was very great indeed in some qualities in which the English school is most deficient; I allude to the picture in three compartments—"Judith"; it seemed to be a very fine work indeed. That work I was told was purchased by the Scotch Academy for a mere trifle; and I have also been told that at the time when Etty painted it, it was with great difficulty that he could procure a subsistence by his art. It seems to me that such a body as the Academy ought, on an occasion of that kind, to give encouragement by purchasing for a small sum a picture of such a class, as the Scotch Academy did in that case. The same might be said with regard to Haydon's "Judgment of Solomon," which I saw with great surprise, a picture of extraordinary merit; and though Haydon was an impracticable man, and no doubt a man not to be elected by the Academy, yet still something might have been done by such an institution towards encouraging a man of that class to go on.

Your last answer opens rather a wide field: you think that it would be the part of the Academy to buy deserving pictures, which were not at the time sufficiently encouraged by the public?

It does open a wide field; but I think that the Academy should use every means that could

possibly occur to it as a body, or to its members individually, to encourage art of a kind which does not exist in England. I think that, although we display in England singular taste, great power of dramatic expression, very great refinement, and also a fine perception of colour, it would be found, if we were to hang up specimens of the old masters on one side of a room and the best specimens of the English school on the other, that the grave dignity generally characteristic of the old works would be entirely absent from ours.

I gather then your opinion to be that, besides the apartments which are destined to contain the annual exhibition, there should be another series of apartments in which, by degrees, the Academy should form a collection of works of English artists, at least of such as were not in their origin appreciated ?

No doubt that would be an advantage ; but perhaps it would be too much to expect from them. I only mentioned those as cases which occurred to me in which a body of men, very desirous of encouraging art, might have done something which they have not done. The same remark, as it seems to me, applies to the Academy throughout. For example, it appears to me that the Royal Academy should, by way of developing taste, do something towards placing before the eyes of the public at large the best specimens of art. I think that the decoration of the public schools, for instance, might fairly

have been taken in hand by the Royal Academy. With their means they might have offered the authorities of Eton, for example, that during the vacation they would paint or cause to be painted by the students, it might be Flaxman's classical designs, which are extremely beautiful and very interesting to the student. The young men at Eton would then grow up under the influence of works of beauty of the highest excellence. We never see such works of art in England, and therefore the mass of people, whether cultivated or not, have very little perception of that kind of art.

I do not quite clearly apprehend what is the offer which you think the Royal Academy might have properly made to the authorities of Eton. What step is it that you think the Academy might take with regard to the works of Flaxman?

I think that the Academy, finding many students within its walls displaying considerable ability, might find a good field for the exercise of that ability by giving the students a portion of wall to cover at Eton, or any other public school, and paying the expenses, which would be very small. It would be excellent exercise for the students, and in every way useful?

Is it, in practice, found to be a grievance that the schools of the Academy have to be closed during the period of the exhibition?

It is a great grievance unquestionably, but they have not room for the schools then; it would be unfair to blame them for what is inevitable.

At the same time you would regard it as a substantial improvement if the Academicians had such a space as would enable them to keep open their schools all through the year?

No doubt, a very great improvement.

LORD ELCHO. You stated that you considered that there was no teaching whatever practically in the Academy. I presume that you would think it desirable to establish a very much higher standard for the admission of students?

I should certainly.

And seeing that there are what might be called elementary art schools under the South Kensington establishment throughout the kingdom, it would be a necessary improvement that any art education given by the Royal Academy should be of a higher character than that which was given previously to the establishment of those schools?

Yes, unquestionably, but I do not think that it ever was the object of the Academy to admit students who had only begun to learn; a certain amount of proficiency was always required.

Still you think that the amount required should rest upon a high standard?

The amount required should rest upon a high standard, and there should be tests. I think the acquirements of the students should be the subject of careful interest, and improvement stimulated by frequent examination.

Should you think it desirable that the education should be gratuitous?

That is a question which I have not thought of at all.

You would have tests, and eventually you would think it perhaps desirable that there should be diplomas or degrees in art conferred?

That might be a very advantageous institution.

Do you think it desirable that there should be a general educational test; I do not mean an artistic educational test, but a general educational test, applied to students previous to admission?

It would be very desirable indeed, and even more desirable that the Royal Academy should itself afford opportunities for the study of the subjects which come under the head of general acquirements. Most commonly the students who enter the Academy are very young, and while in the Academy their time is fully absorbed in their artistic education, which leaves them very little time for general education, and it is too often neglected.

If, previous to the admission of a student, a general educational test were established, he could not come there as a student if he had neglected that education?

That perhaps would be better for art.

With the opportunities which are now afforded for acquiring general education, would not the Academy be rather stepping out of their province if they were to attempt to give that general education themselves? Would not it be better that they should merely apply a test to that education?

It appears to me that that would be the most desirable plan to adopt.

You said that there were advantages in the system of visitors, but should you think it desirable to maintain that system of visitors as it at present exists, without any director of schools who would be responsible in general for the teaching? and would you look only to those visitors for the teaching and instruction?

The visitor is an officer of the Academy, and an Academician himself. It seems to me that it might be left to him; it would be fair to expect from him a conscientious teaching; but to have a director also might certainly be an advantage, for I am afraid that the best men are not the men who are called upon and expected to teach; they are otherwise occupied, and it is not fair to expect that they will give up their time.

Seeing the defects of the present system, and admitting, as you have just admitted, that you could hardly expect the best men to give their time to teaching in the schools, does it not necessarily follow that if there is to be any great improvement in the system of teaching you must look to something different from what now exists, and that you must have a well-paid competent teacher?

That would perhaps be better: I do not know that the best artist is the man who is the most competent to teach; perhaps not.

Do you think that there would be any

difficulty in getting, provided a sufficient salary were offered, a competent teacher for the schools?

I do not think there would be any difficulty.

Supposing that the class of Associates were retained, should you think it desirable to give them a choice in the general management of the affairs of the Academy?

That might open the door to difficulties.

In what way?

I am not sure that there is always safety in the multitude of counsellors.

Would you see any objection to their having such a voice as this—that in the event of a vacancy amongst the Academicians the vacancy should be filled by the Academicians selecting one from a list say of three names sent up to them by the Associates. Would you think that a desirable or an objectionable mode of election?

I cannot see any great objection to it, but I should be rather in favour of the introduction of the lay-element, which I think would answer the same purpose better.

You think that the non-professional element would do all in the way of liberalising the Academy you want and giving security to artist and the public?

I am not sure that the artists themselves are always the best judges of what they want, and if the non-professional element existed it might more fairly represent the opinion out of doors

than the general body of artists themselves would do.

That non-professional element would represent public opinion on matters of art in the most enlightened non-professional form in which you could get it?

I think so; it seems to me a desirable thing.

Would you as an artist object in a council of say ten, which sat upon works to be admitted into the Academy, to two members of that council of ten being non-professional men?

I should not object myself, certainly; I should see no reason for objecting.

Should you think it advantageous that there should be such an element on the council charged with such a duty?

It seems to me that it would be advantageous. I do not think that the want of practical technical knowledge in the lay members would be in the least degree an objection.

Should you think it desirable, in case of an election of an Academician, assuming that to the number of forty-two Academicians there should be an addition of say eight non-professional men, that your claim as an artist should be judged by those eight non-professional men in combination with the forty-two professional men?

I should think it rather an advantage personally.

Why should you consider it an advantage?

I think it is more likely that the non-pro-

fessional men would be without predilections; not entirely, no one is, but without any special taste for one or other style of painting. I think it very often happens that professional men become accustomed to look at works of art from a professional point of view, almost, if not entirely. The non-professional element would therefore be an advantage.

You are aware that the germ of such a reform already exists in the Academy in the shape of honorary members, who perform no duties and have no privileges?

Yes.

Should you consider that the position of the Academy in the public estimation of its weight as a great art institution would be in any way lowered by the addition of such non-professional men, or that on the contrary it would be very much raised?

For myself I am entirely in favour of it. Its importance would be increased. I cannot see how it would be diminished, or how such a change would work disadvantageously.

You have expressed a very strong opinion in favour of the Academy containing within itself all that is distinguished in painting, sculpture, and architecture?

Unquestionably.

Should you think it desirable that the relative proportions of those three branches should be fixed and determined, that is to say, the relative numbers of the representatives of those branches?

I do not see any reason for that because, probably, the relative numbers of distinguished men in the respective branches might fluctuate. Generally there are fewer sculptors than painters, and so in the case of architects; but the number of sculptors might increase, and I do not see any reason for having a fixed proportion.

You consider that architecture should be fully represented?

Yes; I look upon architecture as one of the most important branches of art. I lament that the three branches should be called three branches; they were not considered as three branches formerly, but were combined in one, and were practised by one and the same man.

The architect builds, while the painter decorates the work of the architect in many cases; in fact, the most monumental painting is that painting which decorates the work raised by architects?

Yes, and the noblest. It would be highly desirable to stimulate as much as possible the taste for that in England, and I think that if a number of buildings were decorated a taste would grow up. What we have not known we do not care about, but we should care about it if we had it set before us. It seems to me that it would be highly important, whether it were done by the Royal Academy or by any other public institution, to decorate the public buildings of England as much as possible. It is the only way of making the Fine Arts general.

Supposing that you had the Academy so constituted as you seem to wish, that is to say, fully representing all that is great in art, and comprising also that non-professional element, consisting of persons of standing and position with a knowledge and love of art, you then would get a kind of permanent council, which the minister of works, or whoever may have the charge of public monuments and improvements, might consult on all questions relating to our public monuments and improvements?

It seems to me a monstrous thing that the Royal Academy has had no voice in those matters. It seems to me that it would be the body naturally to be looked to upon all such questions.

And the public would be more likely, would it not, to bow to the decision of such a body if that non-professional element were attached to it than if it were not?

I think so: I think that the Academy would in that case better represent the feeling out of doors on such matters amongst those who are not professional men.

Do you think that if we had had such a body in existence in this country of late years, whom the minister might consult on all questions of public monuments and improvements, we should have had at the present moment the Duke of Wellington's statue on the arch at Hyde Park?

I think there would have been a chance that we should have had something better.

We might instance a great many other public

improvements as they are called, might we not, to which the same remark would apply?

I think so.

You have stated that the Academy ought, in your opinion, to have done the work which was inaugurated and so successfully carried out in many respects by the Prince Consort, namely mural painting?

Certainly I think so. I think that it ought to have occurred to them, as a body of men having the direction of art and taste, many years before it occurred to the Prince Consort; and I think also that when the initiative was taken the Academy ought to have adopted the movement and given it every advantage possible. I think that much might have been done by the Academy. I think, for instance, that the student of the Royal Academy who made good drawings and gained medals should be given a set of designs, perhaps by Mr. Herbert or Mr. Dyce, and with a certain small allowance required to carry them out on the walls of some public building. I think that taste so disseminated would have effectually saved us from the miserable monuments we have, by making it impossible that they should have been put up. But the mass of people generally do not know whether they are good or not, and do not care.

You appear to think that if the Academy schools were properly established and conducted, you would have a class of student capable of working in the way you suggest on great public

buildings, such as the school at Eton, perhaps St. Paul's, and upon railway stations, for instance?

Yes, wherever there is a bare wall.

Do you think that there would be any difficulty in getting artists capable of superintending such works and who would give their time readily to it?

I do not think that there would be any great difficulty. It would not be fair to expect Mr. Herbert or Mr. Dyce to do so, but there are many artists quite capable of directing such works.

MR. REEVE. Has it occurred to you that those exercises of the students in the Academy, which would be, no doubt, very beneficial to them, might not always be satisfactory to the public, and that some time after they had been executed they might have to be effaced?

It is extremely improbable public taste would be outraged by the productions of students selected for proved ability, working from designs of acknowledged excellence, and directed by an able instructor. I think the advantages accruing from probable success would more than compensate for the risk of possible failure. Anything well drawn, and coloured in a simple and harmonious manner, would have very little objectionable about it; and if Mr. Dyce or Mr. Herbert would give designs and just overlook the students employed, or have them overlooked by competent men, the results could not be very bad.

LORD ELCHO. I apprehend your meaning to

be that, take the Eton school or any other public building, some artist of distinction should be invited to give designs, and should superintend the covering of those walls with works of art; and that he should have working under him students of the Royal Academy.

Yes; but that an artist of distinction himself should superintend it, or overlook it, I do not know would be absolutely necessary, because there are many men exceedingly capable of overlooking, though not capable of producing original works. I do not mean that we should have things that would go down to all ages for the admiration of the world; for, were it necessary, they could even be effaced and reproduced. I cannot see any evil in that.

Eventually you might get something worth preserving?

Yes; and it is important that the student in the beginning should be called upon to exercise his mind in a way which would render him a great artist in every branch—as a landscape painter, or as an animal painter, or anything else; it is very important that some inducement should be offered, and that some test should be required.

You have yourself, have you not, led the way in what you have suggested by offering to paint the great hall at Lincoln's Inn, and doing so?

Yes; I was not quite the man to do it, wanting health and many other things, but I did what I could. And also years ago I offered to paint the great hall at the Euston Square Station.

If I mistake not, the offer which you made was to paint that hall, simply receiving the bare outlay for your expenditure in scaffolding and colours?

Yes.

That offer was made by you through a friend to the Chairman of the railway company at that time?

I believe it was made to the Chairman.

It was not accepted?

No.

Was the reason why it was not accepted stated privately to be that, in the state of railway property, they would not be justified in going even to the expense which would be required merely for the scaffolding and the colours?

Yes; the architect expressed great alarm about it.

Mr. Reeve. Does it not appear to you that what you have suggested would involve a sacrifice of time, and consequently of money, on the part of an artist which few gentlemen in the professional life could by possibility make?

No, I do not think so. Mr. Maclise, for example, if he were requested to furnish a series of designs for the Royal Academy, to be executed under the supervision of a competent man, would, I feel sure, make them with great pleasure, and even if the Academy were to pay him something for doing them he would not probably charge a great deal, and it would be money well spent; I am quite sure he and many others would for a

public purpose of the kind make such designs with a great deal of pleasure. But supposing they would not, I would take Flaxman's designs to begin with as being admirably adapted for mural decoration, the execution of which would be exceedingly useful to pupils studying at the Academy. They are the admiration of the whole world, and I think that if they were perfectly well drawn, with all their beauties attended to, and if the colouring were executed in a simple and harmonious manner, they would be very fine works.

LORD ELCHO. Do you think that the taste for those mural decorations is increasing in this country?

Not so much as would be desirable, but that is mainly because they are not enough seen. They are only executed where the public at large do not see them, and I think also they are much too expensive. I should at first employ students upon them, and scatter them abroad as much as possible.

There has been a tendency, has there not, lately in the new churches that have been erected in some quarters to call in the painter's art to embellish those buildings?

Yes; I myself have painted a fresco in the church of St. James the Less, in Garden Street, near Vauxhall Bridge. Mr. Armitage at this moment, I dare say, is painting upon some walls in a Roman Catholic Church at Islington. I believe he has made there the same kind of offer

that I made to the London and North-Western Railway Company.

Do you know of any other artist so employed?

Mr. Leighton is painting an apse in Hampshire.

Mr. Dyce executed some paintings in the Church of All Saints in Margaret Street, did he not?

Yes.

Do you not consider it essential that, where these fresco paintings are to be executed in any great hall, the decoration of the whole of that hall should be under the superintendence and direction of one mind?

Unquestionably, of the very greatest advantage.

Is the system, in your opinion, a sound one of giving panels in a corridor to different artists, to be decorated in fresco according to their own notions?

I disapprove of it very much; the result of it must be inharmonious.

CHAIRMAN. You refer to the case of the Houses of Parliament?

That is the only case that I know of, but in theory I should disapprove of it.

LORD ELCHO. Mural decoration in ancient times was not so conducted, was it?

It was always, I think, when possible, given to one man; one building might have been decorated by several men, but, as a rule, one portion of it or one room was always decorated by one man.

Decoration conducted on the contrary principle becomes, does it not, more like an exhibition of a series of water-colour pictures?

I think it is unsatisfactory; I think the harmony and dignity of the whole work is necessarily lost.

Can you tell us what has been done with reference to the decoration of St. Paul's?

The matter is under consideration, I believe; but at present I believe nothing has been done.

Is that entirely under the Dean and Chapter?

I imagine it is.

No other body has anything to say to the decoration of what is perhaps the finest monument in the world?

I imagine that to be the case, but I cannot speak positively.

Have any competitive designs been invited for the decoration of the dome of St. Paul's?

Not yet, but the subject is under consideration.

CHAIRMAN. Have not the Dean and Chapter a permanent architect?

Yes; Mr. Penrose.

LORD ELCHO. Have not designs been called for from certain artists?

Designs were called for, for a mosaic that was proposed to be put up over the window. I sent one myself, Mr. Leighton sent one, Mr. Stevens was to have sent one; three or four were asked to compete.

By whom were they asked?

By the Dean.

Were these designs exhibited?

They were not publicly exhibited, but I believe they are to be when the model of the one selected has been made.

A decision has been come to?

Yes.

And after the decision has been come to and the model has been made, then there is to be an exhibition?

There is then to be an exhibition of all the works sent in.

It will then be too late to make any changes?

Yes.

Should you think that such a question as the ornamentation of the dome of St. Paul's either with fresco paintings or mosaics is one that would legitimately come before the Royal Academy, constituted and reformed in the way I have ventured to suggest?

I think it ought to do so, certainly. I think such a body ought to be the body to whom one would naturally turn upon all such questions.

MR. STIRLING. Would there be any difficulty in the Dean and Chapter getting good advice for the decoration of their building through the Royal Academy as at present constituted?

The Royal Academy as at present constituted, I suppose, comprises all the men of the greatest reputation, and I imagine, therefore, that they would get good advice; but I think the Royal Academy, as in the case of all private bodies, is

probably somewhat limited in its views, and I think that better advice would be obtained by admitting public opinion into it.

You said that you were disposed heartily to approve of the introduction of something like a lay element into the counsel of the Royal Academy as suggested by Lord Elcho. Can you give the Commission any notion of the proportion you would think would be fair for that lay element to consist of? Supposing the council of the Royal Academy to remain at its present number of eight, what number of non-professional members would you think fair on the view you seem yourself to adopt?

I would rather not give any opinion upon such a matter as that, as I have no means of judging, but I should think two, for example, would be enough.

You would consider any approach to half too much?

Yes, I think so; I think that it would be unfair.

VISCOUNT HARDINGE. I think you stated that, generally speaking, you thought that the selection and the hanging of pictures had (considering the limited space) been fairly done?

I think very fairly; it would be very unjust to find fault with it, and I think that, within the last five or six years certainly, the selection and hanging has been very fair.

You think that, generally speaking, the great body of artists have no real cause of grievance?

None in reality on that score; the space is very limited and the difficulties are very great.

Would it, in your opinion, taking that into consideration, be desirable to confine the interference of the non-professional members to the general administration of the affairs of the Academy, such as the election of the Royal Academicians and Associates, and to exclude them from any share in the selection and hanging of pictures?

I should see no great reason for excluding them from that. I think a non-professional opinion on pictures is very often exceedingly valuable.

I ask the question because we have it in evidence that the artists generally would, in the opinion of some of the members of the Academy, have a great objection to have their works submitted for selection and for hanging to the opinion of non-professional members.

I can in no degree affect to represent the general opinion, for I do not know what it is; but, as far as I am concerned, I do not feel the objection at all. I think every man of taste and general acquirements is likely to be a very good judge of art. I do not see why he should not be. I do not speak of technical qualities; but upon those qualities which are most important, and which affect the general character of a work of art, a non-professional man is sometimes a better judge than a painter or a sculptor.

Speaking for yourself, you would be in favour

of their being admitted as members of the council appointed to select and hang pictures?

I can see no objection to it, speaking for myself only.

You think it would give confidence to the artistic world generally?

I believe it would.

I presume you would recommend that those non-professional members should also have a voice in the election of Associates and Royal Academicians, and should have a share in the general administration of the Academy?

Yes, I should unquestionably. I think their views would be very valuable in the case of the election of members.

You are probably aware of the mode of election both of Associates and of Royal Academicians?

I have a general knowledge of it.

Instead of the present system of compelling an artist to put down his name year after year, has it ever struck you that it might be desirable that an artist should be proposed and seconded in the general assembly, and be at once elected a member of the Royal Academy?

I can see no objection to doing it in the way in which members are elected at a club, which seems to me a very fair mode of doing it; this has been practised without any disadvantage in other cases. I think that the requiring an artist to put down his name is a vexatious and unnecessary thing. I think that every man should

be eligible who has been an exhibitor for any length of time.

One of the arguments that have been adduced in favour of requiring an artist to put down his name has been this, namely, that it is desirable that the Royal Academy should know previously whether the artist if elected would accept the honour?

I think that the Royal Academy would find very little difficulty in ascertaining that otherwise, and even if they should find themselves mistaken, it does not appear to me that any great harm would be done.

The willingness of the artist to become a member might always be ascertained, might it not, by private communications through some common friend?

Certainly, with the greatest possible ease.

Carrying out the principle of recognising all the branches of art in the Royal Academy, do you think it desirable that water-colour painters should be admitted to the honours of the Academy?

I can see no reason against it at all; but if the Academy by the distinction it confers is to command the respect of posterity, it seems to me that the highest honours ought not to be given to any man who only practises one branch of art, because I do not think he can be a really great man. I think that art embraces the whole of those conditions which are to be represented to the mind through the medium of the eye. It

seems to me that the subdivision into branches is a modern absurdity—it was perfectly unknown formerly—no such idea entered into the heads of the old masters.

It has been urged that the water-colour societies would not like to have their best men taken from them and elected members of the Royal Academy. Do you think that that would be the case, or do you think that they would consider it a compliment paid to their societies if occasionally one of their members was elected an Associate or a Royal Academician?

I think that if he were by such election taken away from them altogether they might probably object; but I do not see any particular objection to an artist being a member of both societies. I have not thought much about it; but if there are to be two societies I cannot see why a certain number of members might not belong to each. I am not prepared, however, to give an opinion upon that.

You lay down this broad principle, that the Royal Academy should combine all branches of art, and that consequently the best specimens of water-colour painting ought to have the means of exhibition in the Royal Academy?

Yes, I think so. The water-colour school has been held up as the only real national expression in art; and certainly it stands very high indeed. I cannot see why it should be excluded.

You have spoken about a higher test of examination being applied to students; do you

mean on admission? Lord Elcho suggested that it should be applied on admission.

I have not considered that; but now that there are so many other schools which formerly did not exist I think that would be the best plan.

Do you think that there is any force in the objection that, by instituting such a test as has been suggested, the Academy might run the risk of losing occasionally a man like Turner?

Such a man as Turner would have probably set to work to gain the necessary acquirements, if he desired to enter the Academy, and would have acquired an amount of education which would have been valuable to him.

Do you think, from your experience of the competency of the students in the Royal Academy, that they are competent to undertake the painting of frescoes on the walls of public buildings?

With regard to the competency of the students at present, I do not know anything about it. I believe the schools have greatly fallen off in numbers; but I should imagine that they would certainly be competent, I do not say to execute the greatest works of art, but to execute such works as would be very valuable indeed in forming the public taste generally and improving themselves.

Have you ever seen any of the works of the students in the painting school in the Royal Academy?

Occasionally I have.

From those works should you say that the students were competent to undertake fresco painting on the walls of public buildings?

It is not possible to judge in the least degree from the copies they have made in the Royal Academy or anywhere else. I do not see the value of copies in general. I think copying is very little more than a waste of time; and I think too that the general practice of drawing from the nude figure is of very little importance, hardly of any use whatever. The figure is put in one position and fixed there without expression, with no play of light and shadow and colour, and is therefore perfectly unnatural. I do not think the student learns anything from it; he acquires a little facility and that is all.

I understood you to recommend that the student on admission should be at once set to work on painting and drawing from the nude model?

I do not know that I quite recommended that, but I recommended that the nude model should always be present, or, if not always, for an hour at least each day in the antique school, and that the study of the antique should be aided by reference to the living figure, which should be put into various actions.

Under the proper superintendence and instruction of some competent professor?

Unquestionably. Some time ago it was said that it was not fair to expect that men in a high

position, men making a great deal of money and living by their profession, should be called upon to give up their time to the Royal Academy as teachers; I think it would not be fair, but there are competent men, unquestionably, who would perform the duty. I may instance Mr. Armitage. It is exactly twenty years this very month since Mr. Armitage surprised the British public by his drawing of the "Landing of Julius Caesar," which gained one of the first prizes. That drawing was made in France, consequently it was necessary for him to make an original drawing in England to prove that he executed that which gained the prize. He made that drawing, which I remember seeing, and it was a wonderful specimen of scientific knowledge. Now it is twenty years since Mr. Armitage has proved that he is perfectly competent to undertake the teaching of all that belongs to the human figure; he is an admirable anatomist, he has had the advantage of the definite teaching of the French artists in a French school, and he is a man in every way to be trusted with the education of students; and I think it has been a great mistake on the part of the Academy that he has not been called upon to fill the post which they have found such difficulty in getting any one to fill at all.

What post do you refer to?

The post of instructor in the antique school.

LORD ELCHO. Mr. Charles Landseer occupies that post, does he not?

I do not think his practice has led him to study the nude figure, and it is not fair to call upon him to instruct in the antique school.

VISCOUNT HARDINGE. Do you think that a knowledge of anatomy is sufficiently insisted upon in the schools of the Royal Academy?

No, there are no tests whatever. The student has the privilege of attending the anatomical lectures at King's College, which is very important certainly, and he may acquire a great deal of knowledge of anatomy, but he is not called upon to prove that he does—there is no examination.

The professor of anatomy in the Academy delivers a course of lectures which the students are obliged to attend, are they not?

I believe they are, but very little is to be learnt from lectures; they may be amusing or tiresome, according to the ability of the lecturer, but very little indeed is to be absolutely learnt from them.

By what means would you give instruction in anatomy?

I would require the student generally to draw a human figure in action, and draw the bones, and clothe them with muscles, and to explain the action and origin and insertion, and, in fact, to prove that they had a knowledge of anatomy; where their knowledge might be deficient the teacher should give them information; and such an examination should be instituted monthly, or even more frequently.

And that they should have, I presume, certificates of proficiency in that particular branch?

Those would be very valuable.

You would not allow any student to be employed in the way you suggest, namely, in mural decoration, unless he should have complied with all those regulations and obtained the necessary certificates of competency?

Certainly not. I think that they should be so many proofs of his improvement and acquirements, and should be a distinction.

MR. REEVE. Are you aware that the Academy has, at present, adopted a system of anatomical teaching somewhat similar to that which you recommend?

I was not aware of it. It was always expected that the students should make a drawing from the skeleton, and also a drawing of the anatomical figure, but that goes a very little way towards what I am desiring. It is very easy indeed, by means of a correct eye and a certain amount of facility, to make a drawing from a thing that exists, but that is no proof of knowledge whatever. What I want is, that that knowledge should be actually tested and proved.

Is it your opinion that the English school is deficient in accuracy of drawing?

Compared with foreign schools, as a rule, certainly.

I think you yourself, and also Mr. Armitage, have studied a good deal abroad?

Mr. Armitage studied under Paul Delaroche.

I never studied in any school. I did study abroad, but in no school.

Should you give the preference to studying art under the direction of some eminent artist like Paul Delaroche, as is the custom in foreign countries, or at a public school in the nature of an Academy?

I think that working under the eye of a painter and assisting him in his work, as was the practice in Italy, and as must always be the practice when mural decorations are in question, is highly advantageous. The student is naturally called upon to do a great deal from his own knowledge. Very often the master will do little more than indicate what the work is to be; what is left out must be supplied by the student, and if it is not properly supplied the master shows him where it is wrong.

That has been the practice with the greatest schools of painting, both in Italy and Flanders, has it not?

Yes.

CHAIRMAN. Had you for some part of your own life an opportunity of studying in Italy?

Yes.

Have you formed an opinion as to the value of a residence in Italy, more especially at Rome, to artistic studies?

I think it is naturally of considerable value; it must be of value to the artist to see various manners, habits, and effects.

You would concur to a great extent with the

views which Sir Joshua Reynolds expressed upon that subject?

To a great extent; but I may say that the system of sending students to Italy is productive of no great result under the present method and circumstances. As far as I know, the student is sent, and nothing is required from him; he may do what he pleases during the three years for which he is sent. As far as I know, no travelling student has ever turned out to be a distinguished artist, except in the case of Mr. Hook, who only remained in Italy a small portion of his time.

Are you acquainted with the system adopted by the French government of a Branch Academy on the Pincian Mount?

Yes.

Should you consider it desirable to establish a Branch Academy at Rome on a similar system to that of France?

It would be a great improvement on the present system.

Is there any other system than that adopted by the French government which you would think desirable for the prosecution of studies at Rome?

I should pursue a similar system to that which I should recommend in England. I should require tests of the student's industry and improvement; and, failing everything else, if the Royal Academy required each painter to produce a copy from some of the great works existing, we might have a very noble gallery

of works highly important as a test to hang up in some building, such as the International Exhibition rooms, by the side of which we might hang works of modern art, and so test our relative position.

For such a system as you have now suggested, it would not answer to send the travelling students to Rome as at present, without guidance or direction, but it would be requisite to have some artist who should exercise some degree of control over them while at Rome?

That would be necessary.

And would also be a check to any possible irregularity or ill-conduct that might be apprehended in the students?

Unquestionably. It could only act beneficially in every way.

And would afford encouragement and guidance to them in their studies?

Yes.

Therefore, if the system be persevered in, you would not recommend a continuance, and still less an increase, in the number of travelling students, but you would rather recommend a new system, and establish what may be called a Branch Academy at Rome?

I should think it would be much better to institute a new system which should be guided by some definite principle.

In your own person, do you think you derived great benefit from the opportunity of studying in Italy; do you regard it as part of your

education in art to which you look back with satisfaction?

Unquestionably it must be so; but I do not think it absolutely necessary that an artist should go to Italy. There are in England quite a sufficient number of works of art to prove to him what may be done; and I think that with those, and the Elgin marbles, it is not absolutely necessary that students should travel, but it is obvious that much is to be gained by travelling —the mind must be enlarged by it.

You do not consider it necessary, but you consider it advantageous?

Highly advantageous.

Supplementary Evidence of G. F. Watts, Esq., enclosed in a Letter to Lord Elcho, April 24th, 1863.

"Little Holland House,
"*April 4th*, 1863.

"One of the most important functions of the Royal Academy should be the study and application of practical chemistry to the purposes of art. The uncertainty which exists respecting the permanence of colours and the trustworthiness of media employed should long ago have been removed. Those artists who are honest enough to take the subject to heart make experiments for themselves, and in so doing lose much valuable time, and, for want of appliances, fail to arrive

at any satisfactory conclusions, or arrive at them too late for the security of their best works.

"A definite method of working, also, might certainly be taught by practical men, even though they might not be in the highest sense first-rate artists. A good general method will never interfere with the expression of individual genius, or trammel originality. The great Italian masters worked unquestionably upon some general principle, and something like it is to be found in the present Belgian school. No one can undervalue the practical importance of placing at the disposition of the student means of expressing his ideas much sooner than he could possibly find them out for himself. This the Academy might do by employing competent teachers.

"I have stated in my evidence that there may be advantage in a succession of teachers, thinking the student would be in less danger of becoming a mannerist. Upon reflection, I am of opinion that the student would derive more benefit from following one practised teacher through an entire course; manner of painting being readily abandoned by any man of original power, whilst the foundation of method would remain.

"I think the Academy ought to investigate the cause of failure in the frescoes that have been painted in England, and offer facilities for further experiments.

"I think the Academy ought to seize upon the obvious applicability of mosaic to the

purpose of decoration in England, and make proof of it.

"It cannot be doubted that the English school of art, in many respects admirable, is deficient in elevation and majesty, qualities in which English literature is second to none.

"Every means of stimulating, cultivating, and popularising the noblest expressions of art should be pressed into service; until the people at large grow to care about it, it never can take root in England; and this they can never do until it shall be presented to them habitually; but a people who care more for Handel's music than that of any other composer would not long be insensible to similar impressions conveyed in a different but very analogous form.

"It has been said that supply always equals demand—that if art of the noblest kind does not flourish in England, it is because it is not needed; but the active principles which create demand may languish and even appear to be extinct under hostile influences. That a demand for the noblest type of art will arise in England I have no doubt, and I think it much to be lamented that such a demand should be deferred because no efforts are made to quicken it.

"Costume, street architecture, and furniture prove that the last seventy years have been the most ignoble in taste the world has ever seen. I believe much finer sensibilities are awakening; a craving after better things has shown itself very distinctly during the last few years, which

I do not doubt might be stimulated into great activity by judicious and earnest efforts.

"As the government of England, from the nature of its constitution, abstains from endeavour to give direction to public taste, and it cannot be expected that private individuals should carry out what requires a great deal of experience, as well as energy, it is to such an institution as the Royal Academy we may fairly look. Popular art can take care of itself, and needs no encouragement, but the study and practice of a branch of art which, besides being especially laborious, is not likely to lead to fortune, nor, it may be at present, to immediate celebrity, calls for the fostering that such an institution might afford.

"The artist is not, like the poet, almost independent of external conditions; his work, in addition to being laborious, is expensive, and requires appliances difficult for him to obtain without aid and set in motion without encouragement.

"The mode of encouragement I propose is this:—

"That the Royal Academy, having given real instruction, should, in the case of extraordinary merit being shown in a work not likely to meet with a purchaser, buy the picture so as to enable the painter to go on. I do not mean that this should be a general practice, but the knowledge that such a principle existed in the Academy might occasionally stimulate an artist to make an effort he might otherwise never attempt.

"But a still more important and practical method of encouragement would be to provide a space whereon the student might exercise his strength, in the shape of some public wall. I insist upon mural painting for three reasons: first, because it is an exercise of art which demands the absolute knowledge only to be obtained by honest study, the value of which no one can doubt, whatever branch of art the student might choose to follow afterwards; secondly, because the practice would bring out that gravity and nobility deficient in the English school, but not in the English character, and which, being latent, might therefore be brought out; and thirdly, for the sake of action upon the public mind. For the public improvement it is necessary that works of sterling but simple excellence should be scattered abroad as widely as possible. At present the public never see anything beautiful excepting in exhibition rooms, when the novelty of sight-seeing naturally disturbs the intellectual perceptions. It is a melancholy fact that scarcely a single object amongst those that surround us has any pretension to real beauty, or could be put simply into a picture with noble effect. And as I believe the love of beauty to be inherent in the human mind, it follows that there must be some unfortunate influence at work; to counteract this should be the object of a fine-art institution, and I feel assured if really good things were scattered amongst the people, it would not be long before satisfactory results exhibited themselves. Already

a sense of uneasiness and impatience is felt, as is evinced by attempts at ornamentation in all directions.

"I mentioned Flaxman's designs in my evidence with reference to the subject, because they are widely known and appreciated, and I suggested the walls of public schools as affording surface for them, for obvious reasons; but from the decoration of railway stations and our streets more important results would be obtained. My suggestions, of course, apply equally to painting and sculpture, and I should recommend the employment of mosaic largely.

"Had any earnest practical efforts been made by the Royal Academy during the last fifty years, I cannot believe they would have failed to create a great school.

"It appears to me to be nothing short of a phenomenon that English art should so little express the peculiar qualities of English character and history; the power and solid magnificence of English enterprise is almost entirely without corresponding expression in English art.

"Looking at what was done before the Royal Academy existed, I cannot see any distinct evidence of important influence to be ascribed to it.

"I should therefore propose and insist upon solid practical teaching in the schools; upon examination tests; upon the institution of practical chemistry; upon the establishment of a Director, under whose guidance the travelling student

should work. These are reforms it should not be difficult to bring about.[1]

"With regard to practical details of changes proposed, I do not consider myself very competent to speak. My impression is strongly in favour of a non-professional element, and I think it would be highly advantageous to abolish the class of Associates, electing instead honorary members, from whom Academicians should be chosen, but whose large numbers should preclude the possibility that all should be elected to full membership, and from amongst whom men might be selected (without the expectation of becoming Academicians) to teach in the schools, and fulfil many important duties.

"I would venture to suggest the advantages that would accrue if the Royal Academy could remove to the International buildings: there would be ample space for the schools, and a superb gallery, well lighted, in which no picture need be hung above the level of the eye, as no picture worth exhibiting ever should be. The public are familiarised with the locality, which is even more fashionable than Trafalgar Square.

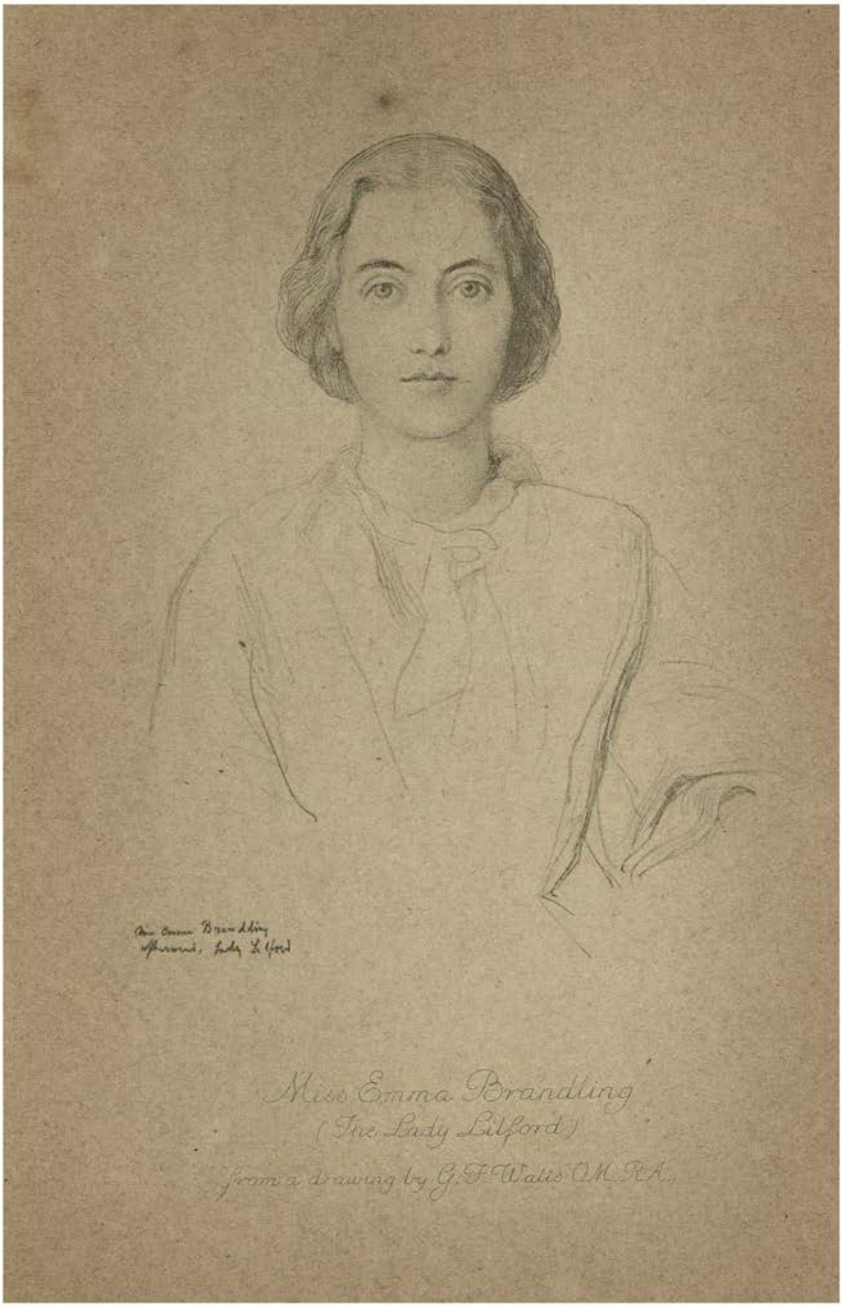
"It is in no spirit of hostility I would press reform upon the Royal Academy. Setting aside the question of duty to the public, many changes are necessary to enable it to maintain a comparatively unambitious position. I understand there is a great falling off in the number of

[1] "My other suggestions I offer but as suggestions, though believing them to be practical."

students admitted, and the importance of the rank of Academician is exceedingly diminished; young men no longer strive after it with the eagerness that was formerly felt. It is discovered that election into the Royal Academy cannot of itself assure distinction, nor exclusion prevent it. Picture dealers are willing to undertake the exhibition of good and interesting pictures upon conditions more favourable to painters than the Royal Academy can offer; and though fashion and a certain rank which the Academy can confer will no doubt always prove a sort of attraction, it is not of a kind to make men take much trouble to belong to the institution.

"G. F. WATTS."

Miss Fenwick


Miss Emma Brandling
(The Lady Lilford)
from a drawing by G.F. Watts O.M. R.A.

V

THE following paper, contributed by Mr. Watts to the *Nineteenth Century* Magazine, was practically written in the summer of 1879.

With characteristic modesty, he hesitated much as to its worth in matter and in expression, and he begged Mr. Knowles to make any correction that appeared necessary. In October the article was in proof, and Mr. Knowles wrote :—

"I assure you that the more I read the paper the more I value it, and the more sure I feel that what you say in it is of most high and real importance, and said, too, in a way void of any trace of offence and full of interest."

Again, later on, Mr. Knowles reassures the writer by saying :—

"If you had seen as much writing as I have you would not be uneasy about your own, but entirely the reverse. I would not indeed tell you what I do about the paper if I did not think it ; and I ought to know (if I do not) what is really valuable in literature by now."

The article appeared in the February number

1880, and was generally considered a valuable contribution. Mr. Watts's life of retirement probably gave gossip an unusually good opportunity to deny that the article was written by himself. It annoyed him to learn that this had been asserted to Mr. Knowles, and he wrote at once to assure him that he was not indebted in any way to any one for the paper; Mr. Knowles replied :—

"I venture to say, my dear Mr. Watts, that to anybody who knows you at all that article is just as obviously all your work as any of your pictures, and that if anybody seriously questioned it, the one reply would be, 'Show me any other article of the like value written by anybody else than by Mr. Watts.' And this I say in true serious earnest and in no spirit of flattery."

The paper is probably the one upon which Mr. Watts bestowed most pains. It was the result of the accumulated thought of a lifetime.

THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF ART[1]

In a recent article in this Review the question was asked, "Is a great school of art possible in the present day?" In other words, are our modern conditions such that not only individual genius can exist—genius which overrides all

[1] Reprinted by the kind permission of the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After*. Written in the summer of 1879, referring to an article in the *Nineteenth Century* of April of the same year.

outside influences and creates distinguished work under any conditions—but are they such as would encourage and create a school, a group of painters, sculptors, and architects, whose work collectively would have a force marking the age in which they live, becoming part of the history of the country to which they belong, and existing in the future as a lasting monument of the best feelings and thoughts of the present time? Will the people, say, of the twenty-third century be able to read what is best in our English history of the nineteenth century, its highest feeling, its purest and subtlest thought, by the light of those monuments of art now being produced or capable of being produced, as we read the history of Egypt, Greece, and Italy in the legacies of art those countries have left for us?

The question is, do modern conditions create or destroy the possibility of such a school? It is to be feared that only on the ground that all things are possible is a great school of art possible.

It must be distinctly understood that a great *school* is spoken of and intended. The position of individual artists, or the claims of individual artists, are not for a moment questioned.

It is certainly probable that in purely artistic qualities we can never again rival the productions of the men so highly gifted, so fortunately surrounded, and so earnest in their way of working, as were the great painters, sculptors, and

architects of past ages. It is not necessary to take into consideration the gifts of these great men. There are men in all times who are gifted; but the nature of conditions will direct the stream of thought, and develop or repress peculiarities of intellectual activity. A great school cannot exist unless beauty is cared for for its own sake, and this is not a consequence of modern civilisation, certainly not in England.

All modern conditions are nearly as unfavourable to art as they can be. It is not uncommon for the hard-headed practical man to pride himself upon his insensibility to beauty with regard to material forms, even when he accepts poetry as a legitimate utterance. We do not want beauty for its own sake and because it is a good thing in itself; we may tolerate it when we have leisure, and even desire it as a proof of prosperity; but the active mind, or that condition of society which represents progress, cannot lend itself to such trifled *Trifles* —which have been the vital spark that has rendered the resuscitation of apparently dead nations possible!

Our modern art, in spite of the money given for pictures and the crowds that throng to the many exhibitions, enters into no natural life of the time. This is proved by the utter ignoring of it in all "*serious matters*." When the question of what belongs to the class of sensations appertaining to beauty comes into competition with the smallest amount of money interest, it is

seldom a matter of a moment's consideration which shall be sacrificed. Few people hesitate to cut down a tree or grub up a hedgerow if twenty shillings a year will be gained by so doing. Moreover, utility and charm appear to be intentionally disconnected. To some one speculating upon what a mediæval designer would have made of a steam-engine, and lamenting that no attempt was made to take advantage of its suggestiveness, the answer given (by a man of refinement and collector of works of art) was, "Oh! we don't want beauty in a steam-engine or an ironclad"—which meant: "We only want beauty in playthings, as so many of us only want religion for Sundays." The untiring interest, the pains, the love bestowed formerly upon the perfecting and decorating of almost all objects of daily use, even when the service required was most material, is one of the most striking points of difference between ancient or mediæval and modern life. Armour is an example. In unaffected, unconscious artistic excellence of invention, approaching more nearly to the strange beauty of nature, especially as presented to us in vegetation, mediæval armour perhaps surpasses any other effort of human ingenuity.

Our confirmed habit of regarding art and all that belongs to it, all the delights that come to us through the medium of the noblest of all our organs, as necessarily separated from the serious business of life, must be fatal to art. The necessity for, and instinctive delight in, beauty

must be felt before we can hope to see great art flourishing healthily. The eye must appreciate noble form and beautiful colour before the jar consequent at the sight of ugliness is felt which would as a rule prevent its existence. In our modern life the cultivation of the eye is sacrificed to all kinds of meaner considerations. Other organs of taste are respectfully treated. Few people lightly value the importance of the cook's preparations. The well-dressed dinner is not put off till Sunday; to be indifferent to bad smells would be to confess defective organisation. Sounds are serious matters. We make efforts to escape discordant noise, or submit with grumbling. But with regard to the eye we submit habitually to conditions which are equivalent to tearing raw meat with our fingers and teeth, living in the midst of vile odours, and complacently enduring abominable discords.

Sight and hearing are the two senses which the natural man, in common with the lower animals, possesses in great perfection, and it is evident that, in addition to its usefulness to him as a mere animal, the eye affords him interest and delight long before his other senses become intellectually developed. In the very earliest stages of his existence we have proof in scratched outlines of animals that he observes with curiosity and pleasure the varieties of animal form which surround him. In his progress towards modern civilisation he rejoices in beautiful combinations of line and gorgeous arrangements of colour.

All through the long ages till the seventeenth century this is distinctly visible, but growing fainter from the sixteenth, and it is when modern discoveries and appliances in the nineteenth have placed almost unlimited means in his power of gratifying this instinct that it disappears altogether. Costume vanishes, utensils and weapons cease to be ornamented, or are ornamented with a conscious effort instead of natural impulse, beauty of form and colour no longer has any charm, and the eye becomes indifferent. The ugliness of most things connected with our ordinary habits is most remarkable. A well-dressed gentleman ready for dinner or attired for any ceremony is a pitiable example—his vesture nearly formless and quite foldless if he can have his will. His legs, unshapen props—his shirt front, a void—his dress coat, an unspeakable piece of ignobleness. Put it into sculpture, and see the result. The genius of Pheidias might be defied to produce anything satisfactory. We see without disapproval ugly, shapeless, ignoble forms, and it must be remembered that these form the language in which the artist has to speak. The human form, the noblest and most interesting study for the artist, is distorted in the case of men's dress by such monstrous garments, and in the case of women's dress by extravagant arrangements which impede all simple nobility and refined grace of movement.

If in our public schools any attention were bestowed upon the cultivation of the sense of

beauty, the educated gentleman would not encourage by his admiration the vagaries of feminine fashions, not because of its changes—"variety is charming"—but because all the changes revolve round a centre of radically bad taste, formed by two fixed ideas, viz. that the waist and the foot cannot be too small. Amid all the changes there is no being rid of the stiff contracted waist, really ugly, always so low down as to suggest the positive deformity of short lower limbs, and cruelly destructive to health, nor of the straight compressed shoes, destroying the form of the foot, and turning the beautiful structure into a crippled bunch of bunions.

To the eyes of Plato or any ancient Greek accustomed to see the human form and to understand its excellence and beauty, an Eton boy would be a thing to wonder at. To admiring mammas the ridiculous get-up is perfectly lovely, and the boy himself values it beyond measure. A thoughtful mother says, in one of Du Maurier's pictures published in *Punch*, "Remember it is not the coat that makes the gentleman." "Oh, I know that," replies the boy; "it's the hat." This is really not a caricature. The traditions of the boy stick to the man, who would rather be smitten with leprosy than commit a sin against the sacred laws of society. Accustomed to the ignoble arrangement which has been a glory in his eyes since he was old enough to envy his elder brother, he cannot know how far he has departed from a sense of the natural;

it is pure perversion of taste, for which convenience cannot be pleaded. The Eton boy does not play cricket in his tall hat, nor does the member of Parliament choose his ordinary costume for tramping over the moors, or for lawn-tennis. The Eton boy grows into the man, dispensing judgments and influencing events. What can be expected from his habits of mind in matters of taste? He will perpetuate the pot-hat and the shapeless costume his second nature has taught him to believe in, and all that is unusual or the least grateful to the eye in colour or shape will be regarded as "bad form." Yet it is from him as an educated gentleman that encouragement to art should be expected. Under such conditions taste must suffer, and no great art can have a natural spring. One side of national character will be arid without art, for that absence implies the absence of sense of beauty, and of enjoyment in natural loveliness. The greatest purity in morals, and the highest attainable intellectual elevation, will still leave wanting much that is essential to a nation's greatness and happiness. Philosophers in future time may come to contend that among the objects of wise government should be the developing of contentment, not alone by encouraging the arts of becoming rich, but also by providing as much as possible for natural enjoyments. Even the poorest, accustomed to take pleasure in what is gratifying to the natural sense of beauty, would, if beautiful objects were among

them, as they were in the Middle Ages, find moments of relief infinitely grateful to them in their habitual weariness. The plea for art rests on much wider and more solid foundations than mere amusement for moments of leisure. In the economy of civilisation its place must be beside poetry, a place that should be recognised by those who write upon it. Nothing is so likely to cure the wide spread of habits of intemperance that disgrace the nation as taste for art and music generally developed. Probably nothing but the general practice of the latter can now effect anything in that direction. The taste and practice were common in England in the Middle Ages: and the artistic sensibility was not wanting. This is proved by old songs and habits now becoming obsolete and discouraged. Pleasure in natural beauty is distinctly indicated by constant allusion to objects agreeable to the sight, and the carrying about of flowers on May Day, etc. No such habits could grow up naturally now. While still in possession of these sensibilities, the miserable condition of the peasant was to him more bearable than it is now. Never perhaps in the history of mankind has the peasantry been so unoppressed, but the divergence between the landlord and the agricultural population is rapidly increasing. The somewhat morbid sensibility which would abolish field-sports and the change that has taken place in their character will tend to place the landlord and tenant more and more

in opposition, by destroying a connecting link of great value, and this will probably be felt at no very distant time. Most of us have seen how willingly the mounted farmer allowed his fields to be ridden over, and the keen enjoyment of the farm labourer as he followed on foot for half a mile, marking the vicissitudes of the chase, laying in a stock of enjoyment for the next three days. Civilisation looks coldly on mere animal enjoyments, often seeming to forget that man is after all an animal. It may be right in its direction, but while it represses on the objectionable side, it should be even more active to develop a counterpoise.

The tendency to discourage our natural safety-valves for superabundant national energy will only leave open the fields of manufacturing and commercial enterprise, neither in these days favourable to gaiety—one, manufacturing by machinery, most unfavourable—and the nation must become more and more a prey to gloom and sullenness, more and more seeking refuge in the intemperance that so disgraces us, more and more distracted and disaffected. People dissatisfied with daily home life cannot be satisfied with any possible government. As our foreign policy must in a great measure be governed by the action of the foreign Powers we are brought into relation or collision with, and therefore cannot, beyond the establishment of certain principles, be wholly under our control, it might be wiser to consider home legisla-

tion' for the moment as more important, and by earnest endeavour, among other means of improvement, to infuse more pleasure into the daily life of the community at large, to increase or preserve a healthy state of mind among the wretched many whose voices in reality do, and must more and more govern—to which end art and music are efficient agents. What cannot be achieved in this direction by the State, might be in a great measure brought about by widely spread and judicious co-operation of those who have leisure and other means at their disposal; and art, pressed into the service of general education, as once it was into that of religion, might again be great, and become a vital power.

The dying out of the natural sense of pleasure derived from sight of beauty cannot be wholly accounted for by the activity of modern life and its want of leisure. In highly civilised Europe there is always a large and cultivated class that finds a difficulty in getting rid of its time. Is it indeed a law that gain and loss should always be balanced? If, with increased acuteness in some directions, sense of beauty is passing away as a natural possession (and the ugliness of modern life points to it), art must die in spite of every conscious effort that can be made. Yet at no time in known history has it been regarded as a pursuit with so much approval; it is the fashion for youth of good education and family to take up art as a profession, a thing unknown

till now. Plutarch, looking at the incomparable work of Pheidias, and rightly estimating these most perfect productions, then to be seen in all their perfection, and speaking of them in the highest terms and praising the effect as it deserved to be praised, goes on to say that, beautiful and noble as they were, it was not desirable that ingenuous youth should devote its time to such occupation. There spoke the mind of antiquity, ruling that intellect should be devoted either to abstract philosophy or the business of government, whose only notion of governing was through law or arms, setting aside the emotional element in human nature, and to which the "tender grace" of the worship of the Virgin would have been incomprehensible.

It must be remembered that the artist, no less than the poet, should speak the language of his time, not only because he can only naturally find expression in it, but because of the direct appeal it makes to those whom he addresses. To compel him to invent his material language is like asking the poet to write in Hebrew or Greek, yet the alternative to the artist in these times is analogous to restricting the poet to slang or words of one syllable. If the visible language by which alone an artist can make his thought intelligible is out of tune with beauty, the painter or sculptor, who is prompted by aspirations outside material life, is forced to invent his language or imitate what has been done in, for art, happier times,

for he cannot press into his service what is around him.

The poet has an immense advantage over the modern artist, using in everyday life a noble and nervous language in which his best thoughts can find ready expression. But modern civilisation has sadly distorted that aspect of life which is the painter's language. Nature, as the poet deals with her, remains not fundamentally changed by time, but in these days great poetic ideas belonging to the past, present, and future, must either be expressed by the painter as a Greek or Italian would have rendered them, or he must invent a new method, or he must take what will suggest no noble effect whatever—modern costume and custom. It is too much to expect that he should tax his powers to overcome difficulties that do not legitimately belong to his art. Joachim can play admirably on one string, and that perhaps a bad one, doing infinitely more than an ordinary fiddler can with four; but we cannot therefore say that the other three are not necessary, or that a great composition can be done justice to if played on a penny whistle; great effects demand proportionate means, though extraordinary ones can be produced with small.

We do not ask from the poet linguistic feats, difficulties overcome. We expect to be delighted, entranced, even inspired, so that we also, his readers, feel for a time that we too are of the prophets. In each mind lie enchained or

sleeping "tricksy Ariels," spirits of the imagination. The poet is the magician who, liberating them, imprisoned by ignorance or choked by the dust of daily life, leaves these delicate spirits free for a while to rise into purer atmospheres. With the language of beauty in full resonance around him, art was not difficult to the painter and sculptor of old as it is with us. No anatomical study will do for the modern artist what habitual acquaintance with the human form did for Pheidias. No Venetian painted a horse with the truth and certainty of Horace Vernet, who knew the animal by heart, rode him, groomed him, and had him constantly in his studio. Every artist must paint what he sees, rather every artist must paint what is around him, can produce no great work unless he impress the character of his age upon his production, not necessarily taking his subjects from it (better if he can), but taking the impress of its life. The great art of Pheidias did not deal with the history of his time, but compressed into its form the qualities of the most intellectual period the world has seen; nor were any materials to be invented or borrowed, he had them all at hand, expressing himself in a natural language derived from familiarity with natural objects. Beauty is the language of art, and with this at command thoughts as they arise take visible form perhaps almost with effort, or (certain technical difficulties overcome) with little more than is required in writing—this not

absolving the artist or the poet from earnest thought and severe study. In many respects the present age is far more advanced than preceding times, incomparably more full of knowledge; but the language of great art is dead, for general, noble beauty, pervades life no more. The artist is obliged to return to extinct forms of speech if he would speak as the great ones have spoken. Nothing beautiful is seen around him, excepting always sky and trees and sea; these, as he is mainly a dweller in cities, he cannot live enough with. But it is, perhaps, in the real estimation in which art is held that we shall find the reason for failure. If the world cared for her language, Art could not help speaking, the utterance being, perhaps, simply beautiful. But even in these days when we have ceased to prize this, if it were demanded that art should take its place beside the great intellectual outflow of the time, the response would hardly be doubtful.

As grace of speech is incompatible with slang and vulgar pronunciation, so grace of manner is shorn of its effect by ignoble costume. The dignified reserve of the Eastern potentate or Venetian senator looks like chilling want of sympathy or empty superciliousness in the dress-coat and chimney-pot hat. Social habits have become too level and regular to have any interests, pictorial suggestions, or picturesque surprises. Any approach to splendour on the part of the wealthy or illustrious in position is

eschewed as in bad taste; it is "better form" for a nobleman to go about in a cab, and dress like his own tailor, than to display any magnificence. There are some good reasons for this; display of fortune's advantages might seem to be a sort of insult to those less fortunate, and simplicity has always a charm of its own; and if this simplicity be real, and carried out in the spirit of Christian meekness or philosophic serenity, it is a good exchange for magnificence. But if the high principle be not carried through, there is some loss sustained; the poetic side of life suffers, some industries are discouraged, the world is rendered unnecessarily grey, the unconscious hypocrisy is so much loss to its dignity. The result on art is serious. Portraiture, now its most real expression, is deprived (speaking of masculine portraits) of nearly all that from an artistic point of view can render it valuable to posterity. It will not do to say that a portrait picture cannot be made a good and interesting piece of work, but a man's portrait can scarcely be made as a picture beautiful, or be cared for in the future as we now care for a Venetian or Vandyke portrait, without knowing anything about the original. With all these opposing conditions how is a great school of art, standing by the side of great literature, possible? It is the more a pity, for the age has become so hysterical that every gracious relief to the work-worn soul, every natural source of tender and ennobling pleasure in a climate so unfavourable

as ours to enjoyment in mere existence, is priceless. Poetry and literature have with us always well sustained their parts, and it is a habit to expect they should do so: it should be an acknowledged habit to expect as much from art.

It can hardly be affirmed that supply always equals demand, but man can obtain nothing assuredly, excepting what he has in common with the inferior animals, that he does not ask for. What he really wants and really demands he gets, whether it be of good or evil. But the present Englishman neither wants nor demands what is noble in art, and consequently he rarely gets it. In Cenini's quaint book on learning to draw and to paint, he gives the receipt for producing pictures. Before beginning one, go down on your knees and implore the aid of the Virgin. In those days of unquestioning faith that was, probably, the actual habit of the workman; in these days, when everything is questioned, this is not to be expected. What ought to be demanded is that the artist should throw his whole being into his work, that the religious fervour he may not give to the creed that saints and angels take visible interest in what he is about, he should bring to bear upon what he ought really to believe—namely, that he is practising a noble and beautiful art that is worthy of all his heart's love and devotion, to be thought of first when he rises in the morning and last when he closes his eyes at night. If this is not so, let him never hope to stand

with those who are identified with all that is worthiest in the history of nations. It is hardly too much to claim for art that to it modern Greece chiefly owes that she is more than a name—a place of tombs like Babylon and Nineveh—and that even more than to her literature she owes to her art the preservation of her vitality, so preserved as to be capable, perhaps, of reawakening; nor that to it Rome, though still the centre from which the pulse of the Christian Church beats, owes scarcely less of her present existence. It is to be lamented that a nation which has distinguished itself as England has, in arms, in adventure, in science, in poetry, in philosophy, in philanthropy, and in all else that relates to progress, should have no art that can fairly be placed on the same level. There must be some reason for this, and it may be possible to find it. Art is poetry manifested by science. We are second to none in poetry or science: why in the necessary combination? It is probably because the earnest endeavour recommended by Cenini is not called for by earnest interest in its doing on the part of the nation; its soul is not really felt, nor its presence desired; it is not regarded as the companion of serious moments, or as having anything to do with our material welfare, that welfare which has become so engrossing a religion in modern life. Art is treated as a plaything, nothing more. While this is the case, artists will employ themselves in making toys, and the annual exhibition

will be cared for by the nation pretty much as a Christmas tree is, not so important an institution by half as the Maypole formerly was.

Now it might be well to ask whether great art is really a necessity in the development of a nation's history—if it be a necessary constituent in general social perfection. We cannot question the progress of civilisation, for it is easy to point to conquest over inferior races, impatience of injustice, and extension of sympathy ; but it is a melancholy truth that progress is not all clear gain. It destroys as well as constructs. Decay follows up behind advance, and many things hourly drop out of existence which humanity can ill spare, though at the moment it may set little store by them. Modern habits of investigation have sapped unquestioning faith, and have not supplied anything more consoling. Material prosperity has become our real god, but we are surprised to find that the worship of this visible deity does not make us happy, and more than begin to suspect that we cannot, by any earnestness of sacrifice, bind him to us. The one thing which is more than ever clearly perceived is the density of the veil that covers the mystery of our being, at all times impenetrable, and to be impenetrable, in spite of which conviction we ever passionately yearn to pierce it. This yearning finds its natural expression in poetry, in art, and in music. These are ministers of the most divine part of our natures. Materialism may sneer at imperfect utterance,

but through the incoherence will often thrill that note which awakens a responsive chord in the best side of humanity. Among the best gifts bestowed upon us is the sense (in the widest acceptation of the term) of beauty, and first among the servants of beauty is art. As before said, in an age so given to look only for material, industrial, and self-evident advantages as the present, all elements that are not immediately concerned in the production of material advantages are too commonly set aside, as belonging to the fanciful and unpractical, only to be thought of in intervals of breathing-time, rarely permitted in the real struggle of life. Yet that possible state of social harmony, of well-being of humanity, which even common philosophy is beginning to have a glimpse of, can only be attained by the activity of all the intellectual faculties working harmoniously together. The importance of demands upon activity which provide occupations and consequently means of sustenance for different classes of hand-workers is obvious, and they are naturally estimated at their worth; but it is less clearly seen that the promotion of social sympathies is of not less importance, that the activity which secures the satisfaction of the physical requirements alone will by no means secure the happiness of the individual, still less of a family, least of all of the widely extended social correspondence to which progress points as its object and end.

From a sufficiently elevated point of view,

the eye of the philosopher may perceive that all things are tending to bring about the social brotherhood which shall eradicate purely personal and selfish interests, when each shall understand the necessity to do or suffer for public good, when each shall realise himself to be part of a whole, not merely of a family, of a state, or even of a world, but of the great scheme of creation, dust or oil helping to retard or impel the grand machine. The present warfare may be left to burn itself out, and optimists are perhaps right in feeling confidence that all will end well; but, except materially, the present age is rather destructive than constructive, and, unless counteracting influences can be brought to bear, England may be found left, when the time for more enlightened cravings shall come, without a tree or a hedgerow—a mass of unsightly shells of uninhabited houses, a hideous network of unused railways; and, as we now lament the destructive work of the Puritans, we may in a future day lament too late, as Rachel weeping for her children, the things that are not —the beauty nature gave and materialism ruthlessly destroyed, blindly refusing to see her wholesome use.

The age is analytical and unsatisfied. Childlike enjoyment in anything for its own sake has almost departed, giving place in art at least to querulous questioning or frantic admiration. The fever of the great Revolution still infects the blood of Europe, and still through the dread

malaise there is an ever-gathering sense of what man owes to man, a feeling little recognised and wholly undirected as a governing principle in the Middle Ages; and it is this consciousness which is perhaps the great characteristic of modern time. Pointed to distinctly in the scheme of Christianity, it formed a very slight part of the dogmas of the Church, and its development later is due rather to philosophical culture than to the teaching of theologians. This, in thinking minds, has created a suspicion of claims to divine inspiration—a feeling that, if so large a truth has been left to natural religion to develop, there is something outside and beyond the Church, or that the Church has neglected her work. Peace and good will—these were the first and new principles announced by the tidings, and should have been, and should be, the first principles carried out by the Christian Church. The success of all Church teaching has been in proportion to appeals made to the imagination in one of two directions, dread of punishment or sympathy with fellow-men—Dominic or Francis. The first is most active, and has shaped the course of events since the abolition of paganism, but the second has the most real root; the noblest natures will always secretly doubt or openly defy the first, the second will have every shade of opinion going with it. Intellect will acknowledge its divinity; ignorance, if not absolutely brutal, will feel its natural truth.

Beautiful as was the groundwork of her institution, and mighty as are her claims upon the gratitude of mankind, it is to be lamented that the Church of Rome too often ignored the mainspring of her mission. The deadly penalties of excommunication rigorously enforced in the eleventh century to crush out the domestic life of the virtuous Robert and Berthe of France, to avenge a probably unpremeditated slight, were soon in the same century suffered to fall into abeyance when the great seigneurs found the *trêve de Dieu* inconvenient; though this *trêve* was one of the most holy efforts made by the Church during those long cruel centuries in the direction of the general good, of humanity, and of Christian principles.

Had the Church known the source of her real power, and relied more upon this deep root of tender sympathy, it is probable that most of the evident success of the theological revolutions would have been avoided. "How these Christians love one another" should have been extended into "How those Christians love humanity." The noble principle of love of God, taught to natures spiritually uncultured, was sure to become in practice obscured by fantastic dogmas, whereas the simple principle of love of their fellow-men, going straight to every heart, and using every natural and beautiful human instinct in its service, becoming habitual from habitual teaching, would have harmonised their thoughts and lives with in-

spiration, and led up to the highest without any shock to intellectual independence or vanity. Upon such foundations the Church might have defied any irruption of opinion and assertions of freedom of investigation. Although it is true the greater contains the less, it is no less true that man only arrives at what is of practical and permanent value by upward steps from the lowest ground. Imagination may first sweep the range and take in the sublime principle, but all that is most solid is ever built of the simplest material and upon the level ground. Human sympathy, though the simplest and most distinct principle of Christianity, has been far more insisted upon by philosophers and lay writers than by theologians.

The invention of printing having given to the world the rich harvest of accumulated thought, this comparative neglect of the first principles has become apparent, and distrust and opposition have been the consequence. Natural religion has become antagonistic to revealed religion, which never need have been. This antagonism has had the fatal result of developing a materialistic tendency which does not make life more satisfactory, and which seems to have sapped all chivalry and beauty out of modern social habits; daily social life losing, with its former ceremoniousness, almost all dignity and grace, and with its various superstitions, almost all fancy. Art of the highest kind is deprived of its very breath,

and must die. Chivalry was infinitely gracious, not unpractical, nor in any way inimical to any consoling or Christian faith, nor, if widely practised, to any just worldly interests. Had it been encouraged to pervade all ranks in the army of life, many of our greatest social difficulties might never have arisen. Most certain is it that, for the good of modern society, all the refining influences and elevation of feeling which the highest thought of the time can give should be encouraged to battle successfully against the selfishness, brutality, and dishonesty which the worship of the false god, the Golden Calf, has created.

John Albert de Mandelso visited Japan and China A.D. 1639. Of the former he says: "They are so ambitious and highly *conceited* of themselves, that it is seldom seen a Japanese does anything wherewith he might be reproached. But, on the contrary, they would rather lose their lives than betray their honour." What have they to gain from modern European civilisation?

The development of social sympathies can alone restrain the fierce struggle for personal interest natural to man. This might be overcome, in the course of time, by the inevitable action and reaction of consequences; but poetry and the fine arts, with their softening and ennobling influence, are necessary, more than ever necessary, during the war of master interest, to keep awake the holy fire of loftier impulse

which, if lost, would be difficult to rekindle. It should be felt that for a nation there is no surer road, no other safe road, than trustworthiness and honour. For this end the whole community should become convinced that what is possessed of intellect, of dignity of position, of acquirement, of wealth, and of strength should be held in trust, and used for general benefit and advantage, by no means implying that it should not also be used for personal and present enjoyment. Life should, by all possible right means, be made enjoyable and beautiful to every one. To make the hand-worker take interest in his work, it is necessary to give him as much pleasure as possible; each should encourage each not to outwit but to do better than others, the hand-worker to be afraid not of doing too much work, but of not doing it well enough. Such trades-unionism would not drive away trade from British shores, an ideal perhaps impossible, but at least not impossible of aim.

It is probable we shall no longer be able successfully to compete with some nations in material conditions; therefore, if we would not be beaten in the great battle of life, we must shift the contest to higher ground, where pre-eminence will be still more glorious. Could we but have "Japanese conceit," governed by the principles Christian peoples profess, and directed by the spirit of chivalry, the hand-worker cheered by sympathetic appreciation of his labour and help in his need, and those placed above such

struggle for life alive to the duties of their advantages, actively instigated by the sense that what is possessed by the strong should be held in trust, a possible Utopia is discerned. How often must our sense of the perfectibility of things sigh over improbable possibility! To such as are placed high the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus should never be forgotten, and the friends of the people, still teaching to the people what is owing to them, should, at the same time, teach what they owe to themselves, their country, and to human nature.

All this is trite enough, and may seem to be out of place in an article upon art, but, in the widest sense, it is not, as it is claimed for art by elevation of character to be in harmony with the most extended views, and it is especially contended that such harmony should be expected and demanded.

Even the most hardened materialist has some latent instinct of poetry and beauty, and should feel that these elements in life help on his "serious work," as music is necessary to lighten physical labour, the spirit-stirring march renewing energy in the weary soldier as he struggles exhausted and foot-sore to his camping ground. Certainly the influence of poetry and the fine arts is more than ever valuable; but, to have any worthy influence, they clearly must not be trivial. It is desirable that heroic art, noble and beautiful in thought and execution, should be demanded, fostered, and seriously treated,

certainly not exempted from criticism, but in this, as in other respects, placed by the side of the highest literature. It should be expected from the artist that the sentiments, requirements, and aspirations of his country and age should find worthy expression in the character of his work.

One of the unfavourable conditions in modern life which hinders the production of such art is undoubtedly the manner in which art is criticised. Criticism in modern times has become a profession, and should be exercised with the regard due to the dignity of a profession; from the moment a standing army is organised, there should be no marauding free lances. No real artist will object to manly honest criticism, however severe. If he rather wishes to do well than be thought to do well, he will value help from any quarter. He wishes to stand on a level with the great thinkers and producers of his country, and any who will help him to achieve this he will regard as benefactors; but he will expect to be judged by principles and not by individual opinion, by reflection and not hasty conclusion. Sir Joshua Reynolds confesses that he was at first quite unable to appreciate the cartoons of Raphael, and if he had at the time given his opinion to the world after the manner of ordinary critics, it would have condemned them utterly. There are many who would still do so, and from their point of view they would be right. There is in them no more appeal to our sympathies

through a realistic channel than there is in Spenser, nor any appeal made through our knowledge of historical probability.

Payne Knight condemned the Parthenon fragments. It is not to be supposed he was in reality incapable of perceiving, at least in some degree, their excellence, if time had been given to unlearn and outgrow preconceived notions: but they were presented to him in a cellar, and were unlike what he had expected. Obvious qualities were absent. Missing the evident anatomical combination of cords and pulleys, and the hard geometrical marking of the Roman-Greek workmanship, the fine distinctions between bone and muscle and sinew—to eyes unaccustomed to such delicacy—looked like want of precision. With the critic's (we will not say arrogance, but) haste, he flared and sputtered, and if Pheidias could have been put down by the critic, there was an end to him; nay, there very nearly was an end of him as far as our possession of these immortal works is concerned. (Much influence have they had in art!) All honour to Haydon, who dashed like a Paladin to the rescue and put the critic out for ever. But both in the case of the cartoons and the Parthenon fragments, the public has had the opportunity of maturing its judgment.

The modern habit of gathering immense numbers of pictures together, to be hastily viewed and dismissed, cannot but be very injurious.

It is not with the artist as with the poet, who writes with a consciousness that his work may have an appeal to posterity. The painter's works are not in the hands of the public, revisited and reconsidered till opinion is sifted and judgment matured. He is expected to make the same sudden effect that is expected from an actor, and even the actor is not approved or condemned after five minutes' attention. His pictures are not seen after exhibition, and the injury done to him is permanent, at least for a year. A picture published in one of these exhibitions and condemned is done for; it finds no purchaser, and the public, seeing it no more, never has an opportunity of reconsidering its verdict. It is not contended that unfavourable criticism must necessarily be wrong; it is only required that, considering the amount of injury that may be done, it should be remembered how often opinion has been at fault. Had it been possible to destroy Wordsworth and Keats, the early criticism on their work would have certainly annihilated them. *Sartor Resartus* was so unpopular that many subscribers to the magazine in which it was published withdrew their names. The critic may be right; all that is asked is, that he should have the good sense, good taste, and good feeling to admit, while disapproving, that there are difficulties in the way of judgment, and that possibly a longer acquaintance might induce some change of opinion. The artist has no right to quarrel with criticism, however hard it may

hit him, provided it be honest and sufficiently thoughtful, but he has a right to feel dissatisfied with crude opinion expressed with an assurance that nothing but the most consummate taste and real knowledge could justify. The artist does not produce for artists only or mainly, and the claim of all cultivated intellect to sit in judgment must be allowed; nay, the artist will often profit by the opinion of the uncultivated. The ordinary critic points out, for the admiration of the ignorant, and as if possessing the highest importance, those things which the ignorant can admire without teaching. He constantly asks for one set of probabilities likely to be the result of a condition the artist is not dealing with, and altogether forgets others really important. He is impatient of anything like reticence in form and colour, and thinks the same manner of work equally good for any subject. Much as we admire their genius, we should not wish Hogarth to illustrate the Book of Job, or Dickens to translate Dante; but many an art critic writes as if he could confidently undertake to illustrate the Pentateuch and rush in where angels fear to tread. The only thing the ordinary critic can really judge of in his hasty view is exhibition force, and this he naturally applauds, till the one great object of the modern exhibitor is to make his work telling among new frames and crude colours. This, however much praise may be justly given to force, is hardly the way to call out the higher qualities of the painter. Surely firmness, pre-

cision, and loudness, however valuable in instrumentation, would hardly be insisted on by musicians to the almost entire ignoring of time and tune; still less would such qualities influence the great composer in the combination of his score. What will become of poetry and literature generally when vigour of expression comes to be almost exclusively valued? In olden times the picture was painted for a church or public building to be constantly in view of the public, or, if painted for a king or a great noble, hung amidst surroundings which had their influence upon the artist. In each case the artist's best self was imported into his work consciously or unconsciously. Now, consciously or unconsciously, he feels that he is working for an immediate and transient effect, that his work will stand a peculiar competition, that it will be criticised, hastily at best, and will have, as far as the public is concerned, no future beyond the exhibition in which it appears.

Till art is regarded from the same kind of stand-point as literature we can have no great art in England; and till the same feelings are enlisted in the matter as have nerved our courage for adventure, steadied it to bear, and prompted it to resolve—till our pride as a people, the sentiment that made us great, and, ceasing, will leave us indeed a nation of shopkeepers—till the exaggerated patriotism that the philosopher may smile at and the cosmopolitan condemn, but which no great people have ever been without, is brought

to bear on the subject of art, there can be none to stand by the side of our literature. When art is the subject of discussion, we at once drop upon a lower level. It is rather understood to have reference to a collection of pictures exhibited during what is called the season. Applause is bestowed upon superficial excellence, and the painter is encouraged to depend upon it. The highest qualities of art appeal to the finest powers of judgment, the most difficult to exercise under the conditions presented by modern exhibitions. An Academy Exhibition room is no place for a grave deliberate work of art. It is seen to no advantage there, being out of place. An after-dinner speech must not be an essay, still less an epic. We are elated by champagne and light buzz of talk, the room is hot, and the smell of mixed viands confounding to our senses. We must have something light, epigrammatic, not too long, or we shall be bored to death. Imagine the bard or historian giving out his inspirations under these conditions and restricted to them, what would be the result? Yet it is art that corresponds to the highest literature, both in intention and effect, which must be demanded of our artists, poems painted on canvas, judged and criticised as are the poems written on paper, which the public caring for art ought to call for and encourage. The work which has in it all the heart and brain and serious life of the artist who does it, is at least worthy for these reasons of very serious consideration, and under the con-

ditions of heterogeneous exhibition just judgment would be impossible even if sufficient time were given.

A glance backwards at the history of art-students will show us one man after another starting with high resolve, to sink exhausted for want of encouragement and be known no more, or subside into popularity by responding to popular expectation. Modern public exhibitions are most unfavourable, it may be said disastrous, to the best interests of art—good perhaps for industry, but injurious to art as art.

The analytical intricate mode in which modern thought works has perhaps something to do with the real want of interest in serious art. Art can never be an appeal to our reason, it cannot even be an appeal to our knowledge of complex human nature; therefore the working out of intricate emotions and conflicting passions must be beyond it. Again, subjects for the painter are not those that appeal to the memory, however connected with noble events, but those appealing to the finest sensibilities and loftiest emotions. Ordinary historical pictures, which are little but costume pieces, make a call upon the memory, religious subjects upon the emotional side of the mind. The phrase "religious" must be understood to mean all subjects that can make this appeal. The treatment of such subjects will often involve, to the purely analytical mind, ludicrous combinations, such as wings growing where they are quite impossible, material drapery upon beings

altogether of another element, and many other such-like things. But these considerations may be put aside if the result be majestic and beautiful, capable of enlisting the imagination and making a poet of the spectator. This indeed should be the test, alike in pure poetry and poetic art—that the mind of the reader or spectator should be so drawn up and tuned as to respond to and carry on the strain.

All intellectual works, whether dealing with words or forms, literary or artistic, are to be valued in proportion as they supply us with ideas, or delight by beauty; for the literature that does not add something to our intellectual store, the poetry that does not make us feel, while we are under its influence, like poets, the picture that does not fan into a glow our sense of beauty, whether as connected with charm or glory, has no sufficient reason for existence. This is said with reference chiefly to serious efforts; light, amusing writing and playful art are not undervalued, these being often admirable, and having a very wholesome influence not to be spared in a hard-working world. In an ordinary historical picture, the recollection of the spectator is awakened and carries on the story; in the intellectual and poetic work, the mind carries on the poetic idea; and this is high art, and this alone. The subject may be a dog leaning his head on his old master's coffin, or the creation of Adam. A subject of comparatively slight interest may be easily turned into one adapted to let loose

a flood of thoughts. The man with the iron mask in his cell would make an ordinary pot-boiler, but the figure laid out in death, with Louis the Fourteenth, the mask in hand, looking at the dead man's face, perhaps for the first time, certainly for the last, would be suggestive of a host of ideas—not cut and dried by the historian, but springing spontaneously out of the subject. It may be too much to say that art has no right to exist unless it is beautiful, but it is not too much to say there is, in that case, no use in it. A squalid subject treated in an ugly manner, or a terrible one in a brutal manner, whatever may be its power, will never take a first place; it will be a brawler outside the temple of Fame. As far as regards the highest art and poetry, the atmosphere of that temple is serene and untroubled. It will not do to say that the goddess shuts her gates upon all violence; on the contrary, atrocious deeds do often shape events which fill the world with calamity and clamour, violence ever to be renewed, the means defeating the end. These are remembered but too well, become only too famous. But art affects impressions only, and does not create facts, and it is instinctively felt that the real province of art is to deal with what is beautiful and ennobling. It may not do to insist too strictly on such limits, especially in times when the material conditions the artist must use are not beautiful or noble; but if what he has to represent fails in this respect, it cannot be less imperative that he should get what beauty

he can into his production as a piece of handwork. Perfect workmanship should always be required. This unfortunately ceased with Vandyke,[1] though vigorous and almost always noble workmanship is to be found in the works of Reynolds, and dexterous workmanship in Gainsborough, but for pure beauty it will be necessary to go back to Lippi, Van Eyck, Bellini and his school. The clear edge, the purity of colour, the serene precision of the touch disappear even in the later works of Titian, supreme as they are; in the arrogance of power the serene perfection that can accompany humility only retires from the turmoil of splendour. The power of Titian and Tintoret might console, perhaps, for the loss of the more exquisite workmanship, but till that is possessed the painter should hold by the latter, which the critic should ever insist upon. The notion of power is a baneful idea to get into a painter's head. It is an effective quality, but one to which too much should not be sacrificed. The sustained power that gives one the idea of reticence is the quality that retains a permanent hold upon the spectator.

Setting aside the wider and more generous question of universal importance, the natural interest of family and country should create a regret that the nation so distinguished, materially, intellectually, and morally, as the English nation

[1] It must be understood that these remarks, and all remarks of a critical nature, are intended to have only a most general application to contemporary art.

may fairly claim to be, has created no art of the highest poetic reach that can be placed on a level with its other achievements. England has realised a position unparalleled in the history of nations; her race, language, and institutions are spread over the whole habitable world. Let us be proud, but proud with anxious sense of responsibilities that make demand for the active exercise of all the highest qualities of human nature. Proud of being Englishmen we may justly be, for the position we hold implies that, with all our faults, we possess many of the greatest endowments. One of the greatest proofs —as great a proof, probably, as can reasonably be looked for—of innate worth to explain great success, is to be found in the fact that Englishmen applaud well-earned victory over themselves. A Frenchman wins the Derby, a Canadian the scullers' race; Australians win in the cricket field amid deafening cheers. (All these victories, it must be remembered, are in things which the Englishman thinks are his special property.) This, it may be asserted without much likelihood of contradiction, would be found nowhere else in the world, and is true nobility, the nobility of feeling that prefers worth to self.

Fortunate accidents may place an unworthy individual above his fellows on the pinnacle of greatness, and he may die before Nemesis overtakes him. The life of man is but short at the longest, but the life of a nation is long enough to permit the halting goddess to come up. That

great qualities have been the source of our influence cannot be doubted, but it will require greater to preserve it—greater in the greatest sense, courage and honour, truth and widespread sympathy. The highest patriotism is to perceive what constitutes the real greatness of the nation, how far its grasp and influence are beneficial to humanity and in accordance with true progress—courage to hold, greater courage to let go her hold when justice demands, or nobler hands can take the guidance. These things are more or less widely, more or less dimly felt, and we should be encouraged to feel just pride in taking the lead in material social progress, that we may understand and desire a just pride in taking the lead in higher developments. No one will dispute in theory that the fine arts belong as much as science and literature to these higher developments, but practically, as has before been said, that application of art which alone can claim this power is not demanded, and therefore is most rarely produced. It is not contended that it is desirable to encourage specially any particular direction of art genius: that may be left to national character and the age to determine, but it is necessary that the qualities that have made us great in other manifestations of mind and character should be demanded, else it is useless to expect that art can maintain a first place in the world's serious interests.

We have had a great and eventful history,

but, better than that, we still have, with all our faults, as a people earnest and even noble aspiration. The national heart beats right, we are uneasy under a sense of wrong-doing, and feel strong desires to act justly. Such qualities do inspire our literature, and should inspire our art. Matthew Arnold, in a recent criticism on Wordsworth, says: "Poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest being able to utter the truth. . . . Noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness"; and, quoting from Voltaire, he continues: "No nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy than the English nation." To assert that art is able to make such application distinctly would be foolish, but the noblest art can and does maintain the elevation poetry has lifted the mind into, and is therefore an agent of almost equal value, and it is this energy and depth Voltaire speaks of that it is so desirable to cultivate in the pursuit of art. We should expect it and demand it, or art cannot become serious, and to obtain this effect upon us heroic art must be noble in its treatment of the means at its disposition, line, colour, and texture, and must have a correspondingly noble subject, though subject has perhaps less to do with it than character of utterance. The San Sisto Madonna at Dresden may be cited as the highest example of art, but the same subject treated on a Dutch tile would hardly belong to

the same category. A great work of high art is a noble theme treated in a noble manner, awakening our best and most reverential feelings, touching our generosity, our tenderness, or disposing us generally to seriousness—a subject of human endurance, of human justice, of human aspiration and hope, depicted worthily by the special means art has in her power to use. In Michael Angelo and Raphael we have high art, in Titian we have high art, in Turner we have high art. The first appeals to our highest sensibilities by majesty of line, the second mainly by dignified serenity, the third by splendour especially, the Englishman by a combination of these qualities, but, lacking the directly human appeal to human sympathies, his work must be put on a lower level.

In discussing high art it is well to compare it with literature of the same kind, for this has a language much more generally understood in modern times than the language of art. Also, in estimating the different positions which literature and the arts take, we must put written poetry first. Art and music touch it with the spear of Ithuriel. Art approximates nearest to poetry or music according to its subject and treatment. The *Bridge of Sighs* and *Luck of Roaring Camp* belong to high art in poetry because they touch profoundly the highest and deepest feeling, though grotesque in style. The work of Hogarth is an almost identical example in painting. But all these belong to high art

in spite of, not because of, their grotesqueness. Bret Harte and Hogarth are not greater masters of their art because they make their attack upon our feelings by surprise rather than by solemn order of battle. The conquest may be as complete, but the victory is not greater because it takes us unprepared. For it must be owned our natural sense of propriety makes some demands. Diogenes unwashed and unkempt cannot sit beside Alexander splendid from conquest without some shock to our feelings. Hence it is that the highest subjects demand the noblest treatment; otherwise there results some shock to our sense of congruity. The highest art in intention and most admirable embodiment is to be found in Hogarth; but because the material conditions did not permit of an appeal to a sense of nobility, no appreciation, no loudly expressed opinion of his just claims by the best writers will ever be able to place him by the side of the greatest painters. Though he was in reality greater than most, he was forced to speak in a dialect, and cannot therefore compete with those poets who had the command of all the treasures of language. In Cruikshank the same will be found. The "Bottle" should make a stronger appeal to our hearts than the San Sisto Madonna at Dresden, but it lacks nobility and dignity of character, and does not fulfil one of the first requirements of great art. But though the first and greatest, the characteristics of epic utterance cannot be popular. This is but natural. *The*

Luck of Roaring Camp touches one's sympathies more than the *Iliad*. *The Wreck of the Hesperus* is more affecting than the death of Dido. Measured by popularity, the highest dramatic composition we know of cannot be compared with *Our Boys*. Yet, as long as humanity is humanity, man will yearn to ascend the heights human footsteps may not tread, and long to lift the veil that shrouds the enigma of being, and he will most prize the echo of this longing in even the incoherent expression of literature, music, and art.

G. F. WATTS.

G. F. Watts R.A. D.C.L. 1874. Emery Walker Photo.

A study

Study
(Miss Adeline Jackson)

VI

LETTER TO LADY MARIAN ALFORD (1881)

THE next paper from Mr. Watts' pen (published in the *Nineteenth Century* in March 1881) was written in the form of a letter to Lady Marian Alford. It was prefaced by her letter explaining, as Vice-President, the objects of the Royal School of Art Needlework, which, from a small beginning in Sloane Street, had been established under the presidency of H.R.H. Princess Christian, in the Exhibition Road, South Kensington. Mr. Knowles had applied to Lady Marian for information, as he contemplated a series of articles on the remunerative employment of gentlewomen.

Lady Brownlow then wrote the following letter to Mr. Watts on behalf of her mother-in-law, Lady Marian Alford :—

"ALFORD HOUSE,
"PRINCES GATE, S.W.,
"*Aug. 6th*, 1880.

"DEAR MR. WATTS—I enclose my copy of Mr. Knowles' letter to Lady Marian. I ought

to have sent it before, but I have been stupified by a cold which prevented my doing anything. I hope I have written it out clearly. I tried to do it in my best copperplate. I am very glad of this opportunity of saying, what I really had not words for the other day, my immense admiration for the 'Hugh Lupus'—I felt quite struck dumb by its grandeur and beauty. Dear Mr. Watts, I was so glad to see you—it always does the best part of me good to see you and your works, and to hear you speak of all that is highest and noblest. I wonder if you would think it presumption in me to say how much I liked or felt the better for what you had written about Art in the *Nineteenth Century*. I can only congratulate ourselves in having your pen to help the cause that has been before the School of Art Committee for so long.—With kindest regards, yours ever very truly,

"A. BROWNLOW."

To Mrs. Percy Wyndham, to whom as a member of the Art Committee of the School of Art Needlework, Mr. Watts wrote :—

"On taking out and looking over what I have written it seems to me pretty much what I should say if we had talks upon the subject—pretty much what I should paint. Not being a writer I can only say what I feel. I consented to try what might be in my power, simply because I have made to myself a principle of not refusing to make any attempt that might be

useful, but it is with surprise that I find myself endeavouring to say anything at all verbally, for 'The Gods have not made me eloquent.' Therefore, when asked, I do what I can; that done, failure, though unpleasant, does not leave me crushed. Not waiting till you come to town, I have had copied and send to you what I wrote, not thinking it can be applied to any practical purpose, but hoping that you will see, as in my pictures, rather the intention than the result. I return to my former suggestion that Morris should write, as *he* could write for publication, on the subject; or if he and Burne-Jones would each write their views and suggestions, then, if from my scattered thoughts anything could be picked out, our opinions, with as many others as could be obtained, should in the *Nineteenth Century*, or some other magazine, be laid before the public."

For permission to reprint the following letter, as well as the two papers, the first "On Taste in Dress," the last "Our Race as Pioneers," I would again acknowledge my indebtedness to the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After*.

"DEAR LADY MARIAN—I have been much gratified and indeed surprised by what I saw in your school of needlework at South Kensington. An amount of perfection has been reached which I was by no means prepared for; indeed, it is difficult to imagine how anything of the kind can be better than some representations of

plumage and of leafage I saw worked in silk, and in what I think is called crewel.

"Needlework, which has been woman's occupation since the days of Penelope, is worthy on its own account of vigorous efforts to preserve its vitality. As one of the best means of carrying taste into household surroundings, it cannot be too highly prized; as affording honourable employment to many whose condition must be a source of great pain to all but the most thoughtless, it takes a place among the most important considerations of the time. The necessity to work is far more widely extended than formerly, and every lady knows with what peculiar hardship it falls in many cases. A wide employment in use of needlework would supply a means of relieving pressing need in a better manner than anything that could be invented. Having executive skill at command, two other things only are wanted, designs and purchasers. Beautiful designs you can always get for money, but it is not so easy to create a demand. It can hardly be expected that an age which sets so little store by the charm of beauty for its own sake, and fails to perceive practical value in art of any kind, will take much interest in your school until its practical value can be demonstrated and generally felt. And this will take time; the impulse that will carry you through and establish your position must come from the sympathy of those who may be expected meanwhile to thoroughly appreciate your objects.

"It seems to me that, as it has been, it must be, for at least some time, woman's work,—a word of more limited signification may be used, ladies' work,—and a work that every lady in the land should take up. All honour to those who have worked so hard, and created a school of such ability.

"And now the ladies of England should make it a point of honour to carry the work through. An effort on their part might well be made, and something spared out of what is not seldom employed on things that yield but little real satisfaction—something spared and devoted in order to encourage a fashion that might become an important agent in our real civilisation, while holding out a hand of help to some among others (though sisters all) whose position in the social scale places them literally within such hand's reach.

"This real sympathy is not too much to ask for or expect. Our little life is poor indeed if bounded by our own personal requirements and our fancied requirements; serious reflection enforces the conclusion that perhaps what we leave undone is a more weighty matter than what we do. What we do is often the result of misconception, of pressure, of the insanity of excitement, of haste; what we leave undone we have had time to think over and reject. Habitual indifference to the right may be more culpable than hurried plunges into the wrong. There are few who would not shrink awestruck

from the certainty of witnessing the end of the world by physical convulsion, few, if it befell, standing on such a brink, who would not regret their best feelings had not been more active; yet to each the end of the world will surely come; every tick of the clock may be counted as an audible footfall as step by step we pass on the road. And if at the end it should be asked not only what active evil we have done, but whether we have seen any fallen by the way or drowning, without extending our hands to save, will it go well with us? And before this, if the end of the world come not while we are young, are there not two ways of growing old? Equally inevitable the end: tottering and stumbling, still groping on the ground till we mix with it in the darkness; or rising like an aeronaut, the world sliding gradually away, leaving us, as we still rise, with more extended view, while in the grand space the things that seemed so mighty take their relative proportions. Towns and cities lose their individuality, and become part of the great whole. The contention of life, better understood, comes with a confused hum, not altogether unmusical, up into the tranquil atmosphere, free from the impurities of the lower air. Such is the evening of a noble life, like mercy 'twice blessed,' blessed by its own good works, and blessed by the affectionate loyalty of the benefited.

"It seems to me not seldom that the evening of our life as a powerful nation comes on apace,

and I would that the eyes of younger nations should follow our progress with admiration. This will be if a great national spirit can be encouraged to animate us all.

"In the case of your school I should have an appeal made to the ladies of England, some earnest reminder how many anxieties may be relieved, how much taste diffused, by a little active but widely spread co-operation on their part. If the queens of fashion would (as they could do) make the practice of needlework fashionable, everything you strive for would be attained. Of course you must have the best designs the most accomplished masters can give you; that alone will keep up the character and extend the influence of your institution as a school of art; and it is of paramount importance that your school should be able to show examples of the best that can be done. But I should like to make a step in a side direction.

"Art, and especially such art, to fulfil its mission should have a thoroughly natural and home side. She must not always be introduced with a flourish of trumpets by a professor, not always sit in a chair of state, or be treated like a visitor for whom we put on our sedate manners and ceremonious apparel; she must be one of the ordinary household, consulted upon domestic matters, with her sleeves tucked up, busied in the kitchen, and very much at home in the nursery, not merely a friend of the family, but one of the family. This cannot be if puritanic

severity be at all times insisted on; a thing may be

> Too great and good
> For human nature's daily food,

and we no more at all times want the perfection of professional art than we at all times want professional music, professional billiards, or professional lawn tennis. The standard may be raised so high as to render endeavour hopeless, and in this way much of the healthy and recreative essence of art dissipated.

"The best, and that which will remain as a landmark for all time in art and music, must surely be professional, for such production is the work of a life. But taste may be too fastidious and exacting, making at all times demands which should be reserved for certain occasions. To sing and play out of time and tune should not be tolerated, but singing and playing with but little voice and execution will, on fit occasions, and if in good taste, often give very great pleasure.

"There is no interest like personal interest, and I should like to see ladies sending, for their own special use, their own designs to be worked—'ladies' own (intellectual) materials made up'—not in competition with professional art. Many a lady whose interest is too languid to feel more than a passing pleasure even in the very best specimens of beautiful work, would find much natural gratification in having her own room beautified by her own designs produced in needlework.

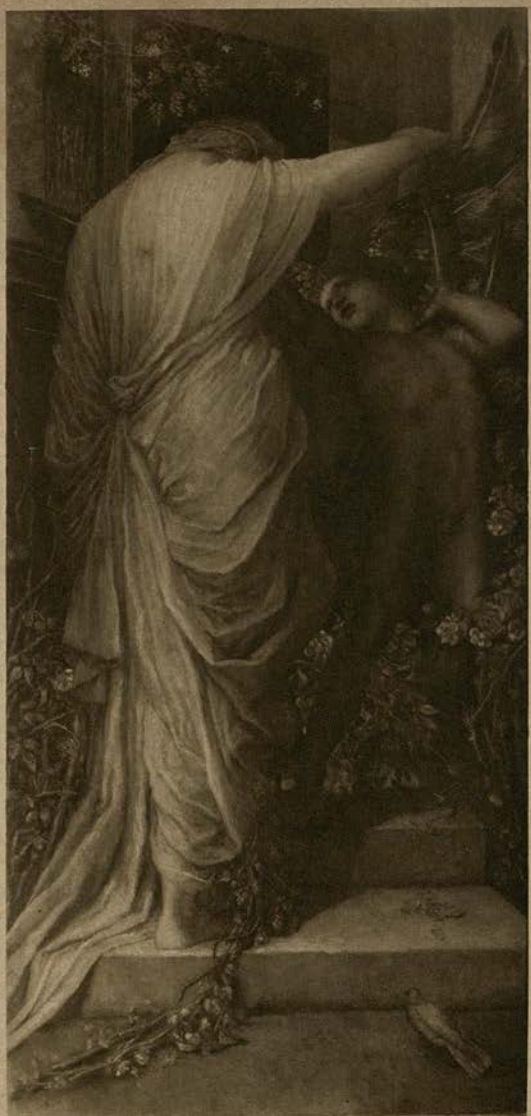
If such a fashion could be stimulated, the best results might be expected. Attempts to produce designs with this object, while they would excite liveliness of interest in art work, would at the same time sharpen observation of natural beauty and variety; and intellectual, interested observation of natural beauty in curves, of graceful combinations of line, which might often be copied without change, might be expected to go far towards correcting errant taste in dress, and supplying for it some definite principles. And, indeed, in designing for needlework the amateur might often successfully compete with the professor, as in the lighter branches of literature; the technical knowledge and acquired skill of the painter are not necessary, and taste and fancy have not to contend hopelessly with the difficulties of execution.

"In decoration, especially needlework decoration, a moderate amount of artistic acquirement, assisting natural sensibility, might often achieve very satisfactory results. Guided by a few simple rules, many a lady with but the ordinary habit of drawing might find herself producing very graceful designs, which, if not possessing sufficient fibre to bear public criticism, would be very pleasant in her own house. Professors of all kinds incline to look coldly on the amateur element, dreading it as antagonistic to true and severe study. I think, on the contrary, in art especially, it is to be encouraged, creating as it does a lively interest in many, in addition to and

not diminishing the earnestness that can only be felt by few.

"Before the art of letter-writing was commonly practised, people went to a professional letter-writer to convey what they had to say. Here I think I perceive some resemblance. The general habit of writing one's own letters has not struck at the root of literature.

"A few simple principles may be laid down, such as avoidance of all forms that will not adapt themselves to undulations of surface and change of direction of plane, also all forms that suggest decay, all that makes an appeal to the emotional and intellectual side of our impressions. Such things are out of place on furniture, drapery, etc.; the graceful alone is desirable—those things which are suggestive of youth, and light, and enjoyment. Representations of creations that are beautiful in form and gorgeous in colour—birds, butterflies, beetles, etc.—can be worked with very great perfection, and may be rendered with as much or as little actual truth as the occasion may require, to be used in furniture, decoration, or in dress; and it is but reasonable to expect that such application of design and industry would bring about the abolition of the barbarous and abominable practice of destroying myriads of exquisite birds. A whole creation of loveliness is in danger of being swept from off the face of the earth, for the object of sticking stuffed specimens about wearing apparel, where they are, notwithstanding their supreme beauty,



G.F. Watts R.A. pinxit. Emery Walker Photo.

Love and Death

(In the National Gallery of British Art.)

Miss Mary Jackson
(Mrs Herbert Fisher).

From a drawing by G. F. Watts, O.M. R.A.

wholly in bad taste, the extreme improbability of the real creature's presence in such places making the effect more grotesque than charming.' But while the appearance of the stuffed bird perched in a lady's muff or entangled in her skirts is absurd or disagreeable, the beautiful and acknowledged imitation could be worn with perfectly good taste; here should be a most lucrative source of employment, not demanding expensive outlay for designs — shining and beautiful things in thousands which, as acknowledged imitations, would work into dress ornaments with great effect, and with how much gain! First, the study of the exquisite creation and consequent artistic improvement; secondly, employment given; thirdly, improvement in ornamentation and effect in dress; fourthly, a right direction of expenditure in such matters; and, fifthly (if but occasionally), awakened conscience as to the right direction of such expenditure. All this and more; for evermore does one habit lead to another and shape us body and soul.

"G. F. WATTS."

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

VII

ON TASTE IN DRESS

It will readily be agreed that fashion in female dress should be in good taste, but to say dogmatically what constitutes good taste in costume, or lay down precise rules to govern it, would not be easy. Opinions on such a subject may be but opinions, more or less coloured by individual idiosyncrasy, education, and habit, and it is desirable that a wide margin should be left for the play of fancy in combinations that are almost infinite. Mountains are made up of molecules; the atmosphere in which we move has much to do with the life we live; no one floats independently on the current that carries all along, and it is impossible to suppose that habits of mind will not be influenced by the impressions surroundings make upon us. We become habituated to bad or good language, coarse or refined manners, and acquire more or less the one or the other. Fashion, as long as it deals only with outward effects, if not persistently bad enough to destroy natural taste, is not a matter to be treated with overmuch solemnity. Proportion

is to be observed even in our sincerest convictions, and we may smile or sigh lightly over aberrations which have no more importance than can belong to things put on one moment and thrown off the next. But if such things become indications of the presence or absence of what is much to be regretted or much to be valued, they reasonably give rise to reflections deeper and more serious than their essence seems at first to warrant. In complicated machinery all things may be said to depend upon all other things; and what so complex as our social machine? The waywardness of feminine fashions is not a subject for puritanic objection; the changeableness affords occupation for many, and variety is a better thing than monotony. But while these considerations should check dogmatic utterances, it will not do to ignore conclusions based upon acknowledged principles. What we may certainly lament is the apparent want of any principle in the fluctuations of fashion, excess in one direction being invariably followed by excess in the opposite direction. Crinoline is dropped, but everything seems to be dropped with it. The fashionable lady's gown fits so closely to her person that freedom of movement becomes impossible. One thing only appears to be a permanent idea—that a very small waist is a beautiful thing, a thing to be attained at the expense of health and comfort and good sense. A small waist is only pretty when harmonising with youthfulness and general slightness; but

when the shoulders spread above and the hips jut out below, a small waist is nothing but a deformity, and it is only because modern men and women grow up accustomed to such departure from nature and grace of line that the deformity is not only tolerated but admired. The expression "good taste" has come to be used seriously for much that is in the worst possible taste—alas! for art, and alas! for many things that belong to the beautiful and noble. With more regard to what belongs to true distinction in matters of taste, fashion would not be less free to indulge in freaks and pleasantries that would relieve dulness and add interest to the passing show. The resources of good taste are inexhaustible; and rules of good sense prescribed, or at least suggested, by natural conditions are no more trammels than are the rules of good nature. The varieties, even the vagaries of fashion, are the natural outcome of society, leisure, and wealth. The sober thinker will not condemn or discourage them; he will only desire the fanciful utterance of the fancied need should not transgress the bounds of good taste and a certain amount of reason. The philosopher should even find pleasure in such variety, for variety is one of the properties of nature; but it will be evident to all lovers of nature (and surely the education is defective that does not stimulate the love of nature) that no fashion can be in good taste that seems to imply contempt for the beautiful arrangements of created things. There

is nothing to be said against the taste of the savage when he decorates himself with shells and feathers. These things are but superadded, wholly distinct from his form, leaving the man a specimen of the human being; but we are provoked to laughter or disgust when he flattens his head and stretches his lips and ears out of place and proportion. So any variety in shape and colour of gown and bonnet within limits that may be defined will be interesting and pleasurable; but when an accomplished lady deliberately sets about distorting the shape of her foot and body, it is more surprising and, if not contemptible, distressing, than the preference for ugliness displayed by the savage; for the delicate and cultivated lady does know, or ought to know better, and ought to be guided by some sense of beauty and fitness. Love of beauty, even when it leads to the desire of possessing it and making some efforts after such possession, is not unhealthy, and belongs to the love of approbation, in the absence of which society would become very angular; but unhealthy love of display and desire to produce effect, no matter by what device and at what cost of good taste and good sense, for the object of attracting notice, is a quality so ugly and vain that it will destroy the true power even of the greatest beauty, and leads the most civilised societies into monstrous extravagances in fashion.

Perhaps all that can be attempted with any chance of general approval or usefulness is to say

what is bad taste, basing the position on an appeal to established principles. It may be safe to assert that good taste is violated when natural conditions are entirely lost sight of. It may be distinctly stated that it cannot be in good taste to outrage the laws of proportion, or to ignore in cut and arrangements of dress all reference to natural form.

The Greek canons of human proportion may be taken as established into law ; the innate taste of the Greeks, their opportunities of studying, and their loving study of the subject, combining to invest their conclusions with an authority which has never since been questioned. They divided a perfectly beautiful human figure into ten or eight parts—ten if the face were taken as the divider, eight if the head—the face into three parts, viz. from the root of the hair to the spring of the nose, one ; the nose, one ; and one from the nose to the bottom of the chin ; from the root of the hair to the top of the head gave the fourth part, and constituted what is technically called a head. To the heroic human figure were given eight heads or ten faces, varying wonderfully little in the lengths ; in like manner by heads or parts of heads were measured the length and breadth of the upper and lower extremities, and also of the trunk.

Whether or not these measurements were commonly found among the beautiful inhabitants of Asia Minor we do not know ; but they are not the average proportions of modern dwellers

in the cities of Europe, the head, and especially the face, being usually disproportionately large. It is not uncommon to find the relative proportions of the limbs fairly corresponding with the Greek measurements, with perhaps rather a tendency to shortness of the lower extremities; but the small head is so far unusual that it is always remarkable and justly considered a great beauty.

Here attention may be called to the fact that bigness and tallness are not the same things, though commonly confounded with each other. A person may be of tall proportions on a small scale, and of short proportions on a large one. A model of Apollo may be two feet high, preserving the heroic or divine proportions, tall as a god, while a model of a dwarf may be ten feet high, having still the stumpy proportions of a dwarf. Now, according to this, fashions that create or increase a disproportionate size of head cannot be in good taste; and the habit of piling up enormous masses of hair, mostly or always false, needs no comment. Hair is beautiful, and Greek poetry is full of allusions to it and its value as a splendid possession; but it never will be found that the size of the head of a Greek statue is much enlarged by it; it is closely confined to the shape of the head so as not materially to increase the size of it. The relative proportion was felt to be important before all; in the coins hair is more voluminous, but, the head being cut off at the throat, the principle of

proportion does not come into play. The Greeks, with their fine taste, reduced art instincts to a science; they never violated by top-heaviness in their sculpture the sense of security which the upright tower of the human form should suggest; and to overweight the upright human figure with an immense quantity of hair massed into a solid lump is to distort that fitness without which there is no harmony or beauty. It will be in better taste, if a large hat or bonnet be worn, to make it of light materials, while one of denser materials should be small. In a picture any amount of hair may be made to fall or fly about with charming effect, because its lightness may be delightfully suggested; but, excepting in the case of children, the effect of hair flying about is not good, for the suggestion of untidiness and want of cleanliness, with general unfitness, would counteract pleasure in picturesque effect. So that, as a rule, it may be said that it is in better taste to braid the hair closely to the head, not, of course, so tightly as to destroy the especial quality and beauty of hair; for, notwithstanding the advantage of form and proportion, to plaster the hair down upon the head till it resembles a metal cap cannot be in good taste. And here it may be observed that it cannot be good sense and good taste to make by art any natural object look like something quite different. Also a great mistake is made when it is supposed that a small stature can be made to look taller by piling up a quantity of hair, real or false; the

only result being to put the face in the wrong place. A dwarf a foot high would still appear to be but a foot high, though a structure ten feet high were placed upon his head. The apparent length of an individual is up to the eyes; indeed, the height of the shoulders determines the impression more than anything else; this may be proved by putting a pad on the shoulders under the coat. A man 5 ft. 8 in., with a pad a couple of inches thick, will look like one 5 ft. 10 in.; for if a man 5 ft. 10 in. bends his neck ever so much, he does not look shorter. It cannot be wise or in good taste to try by artificial means to give the appearance of height and length of line that nature has denied, the result being only to disturb the proportion; indeed, the piquancy, vivacity, and delicacy that so often accompany smallness of stature are often far more attractive and more than a match for superior length of line. Good taste is shown by making the best of Nature's intentions, not by trying to subvert her intentions. In what particular manner hair should be arranged ought to be governed by personal peculiarities; it cannot be in equally good taste for persons differing wholly in appearance to dress their hair exactly in the same manner. The hair parted evenly and equally over the forehead, as it is the most natural, is no doubt the best; fringes are often very pretty, especially in youth, though they cover from sight what is perhaps one of the greatest beauties—namely, the spring and growth of the hair from

the forehead and temples—but variety and fancy in all such matters should have plenty of liberty. What, however, is objectionable is parting the hair on one side, such disturbance of the balance being unnatural, the two sides of all organic structures always corresponding even in what is purely ornamental; and it is a safe rule to make that what is unnatural is not in good taste; it may be laid down as a rule in dressing the hair, and in all other dressing, that all that is false is in bad taste, and a lady should be as unwilling to wear false hair as she would be to wear false jewels. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, in which good taste would dictate its infringement rather than its observance.

It may be again insisted on that a true understanding and observance of Nature's laws and intentions will alone keep in check wayward extravagance in taste. The remarks made about the arrangement of hair must be taken with this reservation, that when it is a special beauty, the chief or only beauty, it may be allowed by good taste to have an otherwise undue importance. It is so beautiful a thing that a short person rich in possession of it in its loveliness need not sacrifice the display of it in order to appear taller, even though proportion is one of the greatest of beauties and topheaviness one of the greatest of disturbances. In whatever manner the hair may be dressed, it is desirable always to preserve the shape of the skull somewhere, if only a portion at the top of the head.

ON TASTE IN DRESS

Among the distinctions of form which distinguish man from the inferior creatures, none separates him more emphatically and nobly than the manner in which the neck rises like a stem or column from the square shoulders, equally removed from the form and character of bird and quadruped. It cannot be good taste to destroy by perverse arrangement of costume so beautiful and grand a distinction. The collar of a man's coat which obliterates in appearance the spring of the throat from the shoulders is therefore in bad taste. Perhaps any reform in masculine costume is not a thing to be at all hoped for; but women should certainly abstain from following so ugly an example.

It is a pity, as the habit has been to leave uncovered this beautiful stem on which the head is poised, to invent or fall into a fashion of covering it, especially as there is reason to believe health is rather a gainer than otherwise by leaving it free. All dress, of whatever form, should be so cut as to leave the arm at the shoulder as free as possible; not only good taste demands this, but ease and comfort also; but in no case can ease and comfort be sacrificed without infringement on good taste.

From the moment the wearing of splendid materials ceased to be habitual—and for this there were many reasons, one probably being growing love of cleanliness, for the magnificence which descended from one generation to another was apt to become a little bit musty—fashion

began to lose as a governing principle regard for impressiveness, what might be called its self-esteem. Mediæval costumes were often grotesque enough, but they were seldom without some strange sort of dignity; for the so to speak solemnity of the materials resented frivolity of cut; but in the slight, comparatively inexpensive materials, lightly replaced or easily washed, the also comparatively flimsy trimmings govern the general impression to be produced; and if there is no understanding of or respect for the essence of the human form, there is nothing to prevent any amount of ignoble strangeness.

Quality of material should govern form. The severe cut, which would have an admirable effect in brocade, rich in texture, colour, and weight, would not have an equally good effect in muslin. So the closely-fitting cuirasse, splendid in maroon velvet or other noble textures and colours, would not look so well in simple, colourless materials; and, if for no other reason, the stiff corset destroying the pliancy so beautiful in the natural form, this fashion of garment is apt to produce the effect of an artist's stuffed lay-figure, over which good taste will at least hesitate. The persistent tendency to suggest that the most beautiful half of humanity is furnished with tails can hardly be in good taste, yet amid the constant changes of fashion this strange peculiarity is almost as constantly preserved. Crinoline is not only extravagant in form, but selfish in disregard of the convenience and comfort of others; and

selfishness cannot be in good taste. A long waist means a short skirt; length of line in skirt will always be more graceful than brevity. This is piquant and effective on occasions, but not beautiful. A long waist also means in appearance short legs, a disproportion good taste will not desire to suggest. The divided skirt scarcely seems to be a necessity, or to recommend itself on the score of beauty. Extreme tightness is, at all times, a very hazardous experiment. Even beautiful arms, when very tightly enclosed, look not a little like sausages; but, within limits that should not be difficult to define, tightness and looseness may fluctuate with agreeable variety; but it is always to be remembered that folds, with their infinite changeableness of shape, and light, and shadow, are more beautiful than anything, excepting that perfection of form which is very rarely found, and of which neither our climate, our habits, nor modern sense of modesty would permit the exhibition.

Nothing is more admirable or surprising in its adaptability to an infinite number of purposes, or noble in the sense of power conveyed by its form, than the human hand. It cannot, therefore, be in good taste to squeeze it into a glove so much too small for it that it becomes useless for any purpose beyond holding a visiting card; the division of the fingers extending only down to the middle of the knuckle, and the back and inside of the hand pinched into shapelessness and

uselessness. Though the hand is not permanently injured by the tight glove as the foot is by the tight shoe, the effect is ignoble and absurd. The hand should not be too small or too limp a thing to be capable of any kind of duty; and when fashion suggests that it is, there can be no doubt about the bad taste. The hand of the finest lady should be able to clasp with the full fervour of friendship, and pull a child out of danger; and a hand upon which no dependence could be placed in an emergency is by no means a credit to man or woman. The notion that any lady's hand should be of this kind is, in the real sense of the word, vulgar. Delicacy is delightful, but weakness must excite either pity or contempt, according as it is self-imposed or not. The Chinese mandarin allows his nails to grow till they resemble claws, priding himself upon this evidence that he never did, and is incapable of doing, any manly work; and many ladies cultivate their hands to suggest the same notion. It must be remembered that the longer and more pointed the nails, the more they are suggestive of claws. This is increased by the polishing of them. Surely it cannot be in good taste to recall our animal origin at the expense of human capabilities.

The Greeks, who accentuated all peculiarly and distinctly human characteristics, carefully avoided pointing the nails, though no Darwin had shown them whence the nails came; they also rejected smallness of hand, such as the ideal

of modern taste demands. Proportion and fitness were to them ruling principles, outside of which they found no beauty. Hands are no more beautiful for being small than eyes are for being big; but many a modern girl would ask her fairy godmother, if she had one, to give her eyes as big as saucers and hands as small as those of a doll, believing that the first cannot be too large nor the last too small. Tiny feet and hands are terms constantly used by poets and novelists in a most misleading manner. It cannot be possible that they are intended by the writers to express anything but general delicacy and refinement; but a notion is encouraged that results in the destruction of one of the most beautiful of natural objects — the human foot. This unfortunate notion, that the beauty of the foot depends upon its smallness, leads to the crippling of it till it becomes, in many cases, a bunch of crumpled deformity. It is a most reprehensible practice, revolting alike to good taste and good sense, to put the foot of the growing girl into a shoe that is not only too short, crumpling the toes into a bunch, but, being pointed, turns the great toe inwards, producing deformity of general shape and, in the course of time, inevitable bunions, the only wonder being that steadiness in standing or any grace of movement at all is left. To this pernicious habit of crippling the foot by the short, misshapen shoe has of late been added the equally pernicious and even disastrous practice of wearing a peg under the heel and

towards the middle of the sole, to the destruction of that balance, which cannot be interfered with without evil consequences, not only to the foot and ankle, but to the whole frame, by reason of the strain upon muscles which maintain the balance and which are called upon to act permanently in a manner intended only to be occasional. These very muscles, being impaired by constant pressure of the stays, are still less able to bear a strain that would injure them even in a healthy state, so that peculiar maladies actually caused by this fashion of high heels have come into being. The high heel is also a great mistake if only regarded as a matter of appearance, as it greatly increases the apparent size of the foot at a little distance, making it look like a hoof, and, to say nothing about taste, the fashion is attended with very serious danger in walking quickly, or over uneven ground, or descending stairs.

The extraordinary perversion of taste and sense, proved by the general opinion of what is desirable in female form, may go far to prove that the principle of evolution is balanced by that of retrogression. The cave-men have left proofs of the possession of faculties not possessed by savage people of the present day, which may be taken as showing, in the case of those who, incapable of improvement, die out before the march of civilisation, that these latter are not going over the same ground of progress, but relapsing from a superior condition. The singular state of ideas respecting beauty of form

in all modern civilised countries can hardly imply anything but retrogression in one of the senses at least. Judging of the opinion of the ancient Greeks as expressed in their sculpture, a modern, ideal, well-dressed young lady, probably by Nature's intention as fine as, or finer than, anything they ever saw, would be to them, could they revisit the earth, a subject of amazement! Tiny hands, white till they look bloodless, and pointed nails; feet with no more shape than a spoon; but, above all, a waist like a pipe, having scarcely any natural reference to the form above or below —in reality hideous! The deeply rooted preference for this deformity must surely be a mark of retrogression. One sense apparently is gone; others will probably follow. If we are to be acted upon, and actuated by, purely material conditions and consequences, what need of any of the finer sensibilities? Human beings may become scientific, till everything but breathing and the digesting of food—perhaps even this—may be done by machinery, and life regulated upon the principles of a scientific puzzle. To eat, and drink, and sleep comfortably may become the sum of human good—a sum perhaps attainable by all; no need of any exertion of mind, or taste, or any of the senses but those that serve the most material needs; none obliged to work beyond keeping watch upon the machinery—happy state!—in which no matter whether the lungs act, their place may be scientifically filled; no matter if the back gives way, machinery will

come to aid ; no matter if feet are crumpled out of shape and use, perhaps machinery will supply wings, or some other mode of locomotion, and mankind, perhaps not by slow degrees, be improved off the face of the earth. We may be well on the way to such a consummation, and congratulate ourselves that in one direction we have reached the boundary line. Waists cannot well be more contracted, or, according to a fixed ideal, more unlike Nature's intentions.

The most serious part of the subject, in which the question of good taste is supplemented with considerations of the gravest nature, is the corset. Men, not always the youngest and most thoughtless, accustomed from the beginning to the pipe waist, without reflecting upon the matter, and without the sense of beauty which would desire grace of line, think of the waist as a thing *per se*, a part of the appearance which might be put on or off like a bonnet. They somehow associate it with ideas of delicacy, lightness, freshness, trimness, brightness, and the like, and value all these desirable things in it. Even that quality which is said to be next to godliness is mixed up with its connection with trimness and neatness, which in our climate, and with our surroundings, good taste will certainly not lead us to undervalue ; dowdiness and want of attention to cleanliness it will absolutely disapprove of, but the considerations here involved carry the subject far beyond the domain of taste.[1]

[1] A proof of what the eye may become accustomed to, and taste accept,

ON TASTE IN DRESS

Women, especially those of the upper classes, who are not obliged to keep themselves in condition by work, lose after middle age (sometimes earlier) a considerable amount of their height, not by stooping, as men do, but by actual collapse, sinking down, mainly to be attributed to the perishing of the muscles that support the frame, in consequence of habitual and constant pressure of stays, and dependence upon the artificial support by them afforded. Every girl who wears stays that press upon these muscles, and restrict the free development of the fibres that form them, relieving them from their natural duties of supporting the spine, indeed incapacitating them from so doing, may feel sure she is preparing herself to be a dumpy woman. A great pity! Failure of health among women when the vigour of youth passes away is but too patent, and but too commonly caused by this practice. Let the man who admires the piece of pipe that does duty for a human body picture to himself the wasted form and seamed skin.

Most women, from long custom of wearing these stays, are really unaware how much they are hampered and restricted. A girl of twenty, intended by Nature to be one of her finest specimens, gravely assures one that her stays are not

---

will be found in the practice that obtained in the early part of the present century of what was called docking horses' tails and giving them an unnatural turn upwards, also the practice that has been but recently abolished of cropping dogs' ears. General consent now condemns a tastelessness and barbarity that was not greater than the crushing of the ribs, and was not attended with such serious results.

tight, being exactly the same size as those she was first put into, not perceiving her condemnation in the fact that she has since grown five inches in height and two in shoulder-breadth; her stays are not too tight because the constant pressure has prevented the natural development of heart and lung space. The dainty waist of the poets is precisely that flexible slimness that is destroyed by stays. The form resulting from them is not slim, but a piece of pipe, and as inflexible.

But while endeavouring to make clear the outrage upon practical good sense and sense of beauty, it is necessary to understand and admit the whole state of the case. A reason, if not a necessity, for some sort of corset may be found when the form is very redundant; this, however, cannot be with the very young and slight, but all that necessity could demand, and that practical good sense and fitness would concede, could be found in a strong elastic kind of jersey, sufficiently strong and even stiff under the bust to support it, and sufficiently elastic at the sides and back to injure no organs and impede no functions. Even in the case of the young and slight an elastic band under the false ribs would not be injurious, but perhaps the contrary, serving as a constant hint to keep the chest well forward and the shoulders back; but every stiff unyielding machine, crushing the ribs and destroying the fibre of muscle, will be fatal to health, to freedom of movement, and to beauty;

it is scarcely too much to say that the wearing of such amounts to stupidity in those who do not know the consequences (for over and over again warning has been given) and to wickedness in those who do.

Bad taste, even if proved by incontestable principles, may be regretted and combated, but if not degrading and harmful may be submitted to with a sigh ; but when vital consequences are involved, the question is removed to a higher court, and reticence becomes cowardly. Tender mothers would be horrified could they but realise how much and in how many ways they are destroying the happiness of their daughters in obedience to a stupid conventionality and degraded taste. The advance of medical science and the many means of escaping from destructive agencies should result in a greatly increased vigour in the race. This is not the case ; longevity is no doubt increased, death is kept at bay ; but the upper classes, which ought to be, from advantages obviously possessed by them, types of splendid vitality, do not generally exhibit such an example. How much of this is to be attributed to one pernicious habit ? It is common for deluded mothers, looking at the grandly growing girl, to say, "The child is becoming a monster ! she must be immediately put into stays." A little girl of twelve being for the first time jammed into the abomination, complained that she could not breathe. The answer of her mother's French maid was, "Il

faut souffrir pour être belle," and so commenced the deformity of the poor child's body and mind. There ought to be no such thing as a waist as now understood. In early youth flexible slimness is a natural characteristic, later it does not commonly exist, being replaced by a beauty of greater dignity; and when a small waist is formed by art it is at the expense of health and beauty. Every young lady who compresses her waist out of its natural shape and size should be made to understand that she does it at her peril,[1] whether she feels the pressure or not, for from habit she may not be at all times conscious of it; she should know that she will pay a fearful price in loss of health and height and elasticity of movement, without which there can be no healthy pleasure and no real beauty. The test of beauty of form is the effect of the silhouette, and whether it would go well into sculpture; in fact, the effect of the lines bounding the shape. Compression in one place must produce corresponding expansion in another, excepting indeed in the disastrous crushing-in of the ribs, which give way internally, sometimes entering the lungs. The ampler the form the less can good taste consent to compression. The sudden bulges and violent amplitudes which are the

[1] For how can so vital a principle as the expansion and contraction of the elastic frame formed by the ribs in breathing, the flux and reflux of the tide of life, the day and night of respiration, be interfered with without grave consequences? Is not all nature governed by general laws that have singular and beautiful identity, impressively suggesting a general and mighty plan, alike active and potent in the construction of the most insignificant animal, and in the tides of the far-away Sirius?

consequence of unnatural restrictions, are distressing alike to the sense of beauty and modesty — positively ugly — Nature avenging herself! General amplitude is indeed far from ungracious, but on the contrary carries a dignity that is pleasant to look upon; but short violent curves are eminently ugly.

What is called the backbone is formed of bones placed one upon another, making a very beautiful and flexible column. Between each of these bones there is an elastic pad; and, threading the whole number, is the spinal cord. The top seven of these go to form the neck, the rest to form the mainstay of that body in which are placed the whole of the vital organs—the heart, the lungs, the organ of digestion, etc. About the spinal cord it is not necessary to say anything, as it is well known in a vague way that injury to it is destruction to the whole system. A great many muscles are distributed about this vertebral column, which is the most important portion of the bony structure. The spinal cord, in direct communication with, or rather proceeding from, the brain, is the prime agent of movement, sensation, and all that goes to make up physical being. This spinal cord is guarded by projections called spines, which also serve as attachments for the very strong outside muscles, necessary to support this long loose column without destroying its flexibility. These give the strength and shape to the back. Now it must be obvious that constant pressure,

especially before Nature has finished her work of growth, will destroy these muscles, if not absolutely and permanently, at least as long as the influence is continued, and that when the natural supports are done away with, the separate bones will sink one upon another in consequence of the weight of the head and upper part of the body; loss of height and power of movement being the consequence. In early growth this may not be the visible result, the weight to be sustained being less, as young bones are less heavy than older ones, and the physical vigour greater. But the strain and fatigue soon begin to tell, and no artificial support can supply the place of Nature's beautiful design and perfect arrangement. Nor is this all the mischief. The general form produced by the arrangement of the ribs is actually reversed. The cavity containing the heart and lungs is contracted, these being grievously impeded in their vital functions; the ribs crumpled together are occasionally driven into the lungs, causing death—and all for what? For pleasure? Certainly not. For beauty? No less certainly not. For nothing but the gratification of a most depraved taste. In this indifference to, this defiance of natural laws, does not the highly cultivated and highly refined lady, who knows all that can be said against the custom, place herself on a level with the squaw who sticks a bone through her lip to make it hang down below her chin? A cynic might ask on which side the savagery is greater. The

Indian woman never knew better, and though the distortion seen may therefore appear to be greater than the hidden crippled feet and crumpled ribs, it does not affect health and free exercise of the fine animal powers bestowed on the human creature.

There are frequent letters in the newspapers from mothers and fathers of families, calling attention to the dangers of football and other exercises; for one boy injured by football or other games, there are many thousand girls whose lives, and whose children's lives after them, suffer from a fashion for which no sort of rational excuse can be offered, no reason or excuse at all but debased taste.

Scarcely a more complete proof can be found of the tyranny of fashion, or the unconscious slavery to which it can reduce the best intellects and sincerest characters, than is supplied by the fact of the comparative silence of the medical profession on this subject; silence to which one must think no small blame will attach if ever the world becomes wiser. Members of the medical profession know very well how much Nature is outraged, and how she avenges herself. If only on the score of grace and charm, cultivated and thoughtful men, whose studies have made them acquainted with Nature's beautiful design, and who have unusual opportunities of putting in a word for her, might be expected to express regret at the spoiling of anything so perfect. For pure love and admiration of the

perfection, they might draw attention to the hidden ugliness and scars which good taste will not allow outsiders to hint at. But they know how much more of still greater importance is involved.

Hitherto most doctors, when they do speak upon the subject, do not sufficiently insist upon the disagreeable theme, perhaps accepting the fact as part of a condition of things it is not possible to make head against. But surely the whole body collectively might be expected to testify strenuously against an obstinate perversity that is nothing short of disastrous. In all matters where it is necessary to lift ideas out of an established groove, and bring about reform, those are wanted who will speak with the bitterness of conviction and the weight of authority.

Many mothers and fathers of families accept literally the text, "God created man in His own image," etc. How can these reconcile such defacement of the type with the reverence they believe they have for the divine origin of the great history—would they at the court of any small sovereign be guilty of the like want of respect? Nor can the advocates for enlightened freedom, from all traditions whatever, answer better for their indifference. They, taking nature and science for their guides, should see how nature and science alike protest, and how they are joined in the protest by good sense and good taste against the degrading fashion.

Love and Life

Description by the painter.

I have for years been endeavouring to understand and illustrate a great moral conception of life, its difficulties, duties, pains and penalties, and I find that justice should be the mainspring of all our actions, and tenderness, pity, love should give the direction; I think my best composition is upon this subject; Love and Life, naked, bare life sustained and helped up the steeps of human conditions, the path from the baser existence to the nobler region of thought and character. This religion of Love has been acknowledged from the earliest times—then with an uncertain utterance—but is now beginning to be acknowledged as the foundation of all. This is forgotten in the heat of personal impulses, and from forgetfulness has sprung almost all the injustice and misery in the world. This is what my painted parable would recall. I would suggest frail and feeble human existence aided to ascend from the lower to the higher plane, by Love with his wide wings of sympathy, charity, tenderness and human affection.

Love is not intended to be either personal or carnal. It is the great love St. Paul speaks of which can be dwelt on and amplified to any extent.

G. F. Watts. R.A. D.M. 1884-5 Emery Walker ad Sc.

Love and Life

ON TASTE IN DRESS

Nature is grievously insulted; it is true she accommodates herself wonderfully to the conditions imposed upon her by her rebellious or unfortunate children. But she does not forget her dignity, and will ever take vengeance for disregard of her will; she may permit the account to run a long time, but she always sends in the bill and sternly exacts payment.

G. F. WATTS.

VIII

THE AIMS OF ART[1]

WHAT are the aims of art? is a question constantly asked in these days. The question never was asked when art was used as a manifestation of a national or religious sentiment. In the beginning of things man does not analyse. We must accept this characteristic of modern minds because it is in the nature of things. We cannot return to the state of the unconscious being who first found notes within a reed and dimly felt they expressed his joy or pain; but we can hear the harmonies of Beethoven, and ask what is the secret of their power? what were the aims, or the aims of any of the gifts that especially distinguish the human creature?

As soon as man congregates in sufficient numbers, his animal instinct for self-preservation becomes amplified into a desire to improve his condition, and operates in the direction of personal acquirement and aggrandisement as a natural consequence. Led by these instincts, man has

[1] The three following papers were contributed to the *Magazine of Art* and are by the kind permission of the Publishers reprinted here.

been continually raising forces of which later he has to judge whether they be for or against his physical and moral good.

For many ages aggrandisement so obtained appeared to be the thing most desirable ; it is the most obvious, and combines the purely animal impulse with the purely human sentiment of progression from one state to another. The world must still grow older before this primitive idea, productive as it is of results flattering to man's appreciation of power, will cease to take the most prominent place in his esteem.

A perceptible change, however, has already been wrought, and great numbers in all civilised countries question the right of this sentiment to take the first place in human estimation and human action. The socialistic impulse, alarming as it may appear when its direction seems to be subversive of law and order, is in reality a revolt against the undue development of this primitive instinct of self-preservation. In its purified nature and degree, socialism has for its aim the purely human idea of justice and right to others. It asks what man requires of his fellows, justice and truth ; for these are the qualities which enable one man to depend upon another.

Justice and truth—with these for firm basis of habit and conduct an ample measure of happiness could be secured, but these would still leave something wanting. The finest minds and most beautiful natures seek affiliation with something beyond and above. As soon as man's

animal necessities are provided for, poetry, music, and art become not less necessities to the healthful and successful existence of his mind, the soarings of his imagination, and the cravings of his intellect.

In a positive age, and perhaps as a balance to the gain all may perceive or hope for in the advancement of universal understanding of necessities, the positive will have an undue weight, and special and conscious efforts should be made to uphold the dignity of art. When common sense reigns there may be safety from many of the evils resulting from the rule of passion and recklessness, but a tendency to reject all that common sense does not immediately perceive may be feared.

The true aims of all man's peculiar faculties will be his elevation and happiness.

No one questions the mission of poetry to elevate and even instruct while delighting, but for want in modern times of association with religious and political life, it has come to be believed, and even asserted, that art should be nothing but a mere ornamental fringe on the social garment, should have no claim to honour beyond what is due to dexterity.

But that it has higher claims will be denied by no one who remembers the Dresden "Madonna." An attempt to explain why this picture is so great would lead far beyond mere artistic considerations.

It is not possible to regard the Prophets and

Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel without feeling that they are on a level with the noblest poetry, or stand amid the ruins of the Parthenon without experiencing the same set of sensations that are awakened by sacred music. The great "Pallas Athene" by Pheidias was said to call up profoundly religious feelings. It is not by the subject alone being what is generally understood by the term sacred, that this set of impressions is stimulated; a solemn awe belonging to the same class of sentiments is produced by the Sphinx, especially when its silent grandeur is seen by moonlight, and by scenery which has no particular association with any human circumstance. It is not merely upon association with what is usually implied by the term religion that effects of this kind must depend, but upon an appeal to the spiritual side of man's nature.

It is not probable that any who have seriously wielded the pen, from Victor Hugo to Dickens, would deny the position of poetry as a religious cult. The outcome of the minds and labours of Pheidias and Michael Angelo cannot be placed in a different category.

Of all the efforts man can make, those are greatest that are referable to the peculiar faculties with which he has been invested—the intellectual. Of these the greatest is Imagination, for it removes him farthest from the animal world. In giving out the inspirations of this divine faculty he is at his best, and when he has been great in this, he has adorned his epoch and has made his

country famous as no other human effort has had the power to do.

Parallel with the poet's teaching it may be possible that occasionally a stronger appeal through art might be made to some minds by impressive symbols of the mysteries that surround human life from its beginning to its close, and be more efficacious to keep alive simple faith than the accumulation of dogmatic utterances. Self-flattered by the rigid observance of arbitrary regulations, it is not unusual to become indifferent to more simple principles, their very obviousness perhaps, by giving them the look of common things, serving to divest them of that mystic air with which many minds find it necessary to surround all they would consider sacred.

Profoundly deep in the human mind exists a spiritual yearning dependent on no special creed, questionings by Nature left without response, yearnings the most perfect knowledge of material things will never stifle. The true prophet, be his language prose or poem, art or music, can transport to regions where earth takes its place among the stars and something beyond of heaven's infinity seems borne upon the air.

Yet that figurative language which is accepted from the poet, and is even admitted into our everyday speech in the common use of such expressions as "crowned with success," or an "arm of the sea," seems often to be denied to the artist. A symbolic picture is a thing people ironically say they cannot understand.

There is, however, an innate poetic sense in almost all, varying in degree, and acted upon unequally in individuals. Perceptions and emotions are shut up within the human soul, sleeping and unconscious, till the poet or the artist awakens them. Nature is full of similes—symbols and parables to the eye of faith, poetic suggestions to the poetic sensibility. Where the expression of these is vague, as in music, the utterance will be differently construed, and in the art that would be suggestive rather than representative of material fact, very various emotions and definitions may be conveyed.

Not that it is to be asserted that the fine arts are only to be exercised in a solemn manner and for consciously serious purposes. All that is beautiful and graceful appertains to poetry, art, and music, and will overlap lines of limitation; they cannot be restricted in their utterances,[1] but as the faculty of expressing ideas and feelings by arrangements of form and colour is man's alone, the truest exercise of the faculty will be in using it to make manifest that which also is given to man alone, Imagination. Animals seem to have the faculty of speech and to be able to convey to each other feelings and perhaps opinions, and birds have voices which seem to express poetic sentiment. Man alone can fix them in graphic or plastic art. At their noblest they are aids to what is highest in man's nature, but below this

[1] The ten following lines were written by Mr. Watts on the margin of this article, after its publication.

exalted range they may be well exercised to cheer, or simply to amuse.

A great teacher of our day, one truly among its prophets, has said, "The discernment of sacred truth and beauty is perpetual."

Farthest removed from the ordinary conditions of animal nature, and belonging chiefly to that divine gift imagination, the great arts are not merely to beautify and rejoice man's being, they are absolutely necessary to its balance and completion.

To the discernment of truth and beauty, to the arousing of man's imagination, to the widening of the span of this celestial region, should art be mainly dedicated, for this most truly is its mission.

GEORGE FREDERIC WATTS.

Olympus on Ida

from a small sketch for the larger picture

IX

THOUGHTS ON OUR ART OF TO-DAY

SIR—Perhaps I may be allowed a small space in your Magazine for a few words suggested by Sir John Millais's very crisp and interesting article. Sir John is too great an artist to quarrel with a difference of opinion which is not captious, or to take as personal criticism of opinion. I think it would be interesting if other artists, whose experience could give interest to their judgment, would contribute the conclusions to which their study and practice have brought them.

Sir John is certainly right in his estimate of strong and even bright colour, but it seems to me that he is mistaken in believing that the colour of the Venetians was ever crude, or that time will ever turn white into colour. The colour of the best-preserved pictures by Titian shows a marked distinction between light flesh tones and white drapery. This is most distinctly seen in the small "Noli me Tangere" in our National Gallery, in the so-called "Venus" of the Tribune and in the "Flora" of the Uffizi, both

in Florence, and in Bronzino's "All is Vanity," also in the National Gallery. In the last-named picture, for example, the colour is as crude and the surface as bare of mystery as if it had been painted yesterday. As a matter of fact, white unquestionably tones down, but never becomes colour; indeed, under favourable conditions, and having due regard to what is underneath, it changes very little. In the "Noli me Tangere," to which I have referred, the white sleeve of the Magdalen is still a beautiful white, quite different from the white of the fairest of Titian's flesh—proving that Titian never painted his flesh white.

The so-called "Venus" in the Tribune at Florence is a more important example still, as it is an elaborately painted picture owing nothing to the brightness that slight painting often has and retains, the colours being untormented by repeated retouching. This picture is a proof that when the method is good and the pigments pure, the colours change very little. More than three hundred years have passed, and the white sheet on which the figure lies is still, in effect, white against the flesh. The flesh is most lovely in colour, neither violent by shadows or strong colour, but beautiful flesh. It cannot be compared to ivory or snow, or any other substance or material; it is simply beautiful lustre on the surface with a circulation of blood underneath—an absolute triumph never repeated, except by Titian himself.

It is probable that the pictures by Reynolds are

often lower in tone than they were, but it is doubtful whether the Strawberry Hill portraits are as much changed as may be supposed. Walpole, no doubt, called them "white and pinky," but it must be remembered that, living before the days of picture cleaning, he was accustomed to expect them to be brown and dark, probably even to associate colour with dirt in the old masters. The purer, clearer, and richer the colours are, the better a picture will be; and I think this should be especially insisted upon, since white is so effective in a modern exhibition that young artists are naturally prompted to profit by the means cheaply afforded and readily at hand.

I think it is probable that when Titian has used brown-green he intended it, since in many of the Venetian pictures we find green draperies of a beautiful colour. Sir John seems to infer that the colours used in the decoration of the Parthenon (no doubt used) were crude. The extraordinary refinements demonstrated in a lecture by Mr. Penrose on the spot last year, at which I had the good fortune to be present, forbid such a conclusion. A few graduated inches in the circumference of the columns, and deflection from straight line in the pediment and in the base line, proved by measurement and examination to be carefully intentional, will not permit us for a moment to believe this could have been the case; so precise in line, rhythmical in arrangement, lovely in detail, and harmonious

in effect, it could never have been crude in colour. No doubt the marble was white, but illuminated by such a sun, and set against such a sky and distance, the white, with its varieties of shadow, aided by the colours employed, could have gleaned life and flame in its splendour. Colour was certainly used, and the modern eye might at first have something to get over; but there could have been nothing harsh and crude. The exquisite purity of line and delicacy of edge could never have been matched with crudity, or anything like harshness of colour. To this day the brightest colours may be seen on the columns at Luxor and Philæ with beautiful effect.

I must further dissent from any opinion that beauty of surface and what is technically called "quality" are mainly due to time. Sir John himself has quoted the early pictures of Rembrandt as examples of hard and careful painting, devoid of the charm and mystery so remarkable in his later work. The early works of Velasquez are still more remarkable instances, being, as they are, singularly tight and disagreeable—time having done little or nothing towards making them more agreeable.

Sir John, too, while insisting on the necessity of careful study—and who has a better right?—seems, in his condemnation of apparent elaboration, to consider it a greater fault than apparent carelessness. Obvious elaboration is no doubt a defect, but hardly so great a one as obvious carelessness, whether real or affected; perhaps

this last is the greatest to be found in art or in anything else, being an indication of want of sincerity. Completeness, the child of sincerity, is never apparently absent in nature. I think that there is a tendency nowadays to give undue praise to obvious dexterity, implying thereby that a picture should appear to have been produced without any trouble. Nature never works in this way; and to make it appear that in imitation of her fullness and loveliness no heart-breaking pains have been taken, is to treat her with an irreverence to grieve over. There cannot be a more dangerous or pernicious practice, especially for young artists, than to take any amount of pains to make it appear that none at all have been taken. Perhaps, too, very dexterous work, even legitimately dexterous, may be as likely in the long run to weary by its apparent assertion as at first to charm by its ability. Certainly mere dexterity cannot give lasting pleasure; it may astonish and please for a time, but it will never claim our love.

I think that a work of art should not only be careful and sincere, but that the care and sincerity should also be evident. No ugly smears should be allowed to do duty for the swiftness which comes from long practice, or to find excuse in the necessity which the accomplished artist feels to speak distinctly. That necessity must never receive impulse from a desire to produce an effect on the walls of a gallery; there is much danger of this working *un*consciously in the accomplished artist, *consciously* in the student.

But this is an age of dexterity; shown perhaps more in musical performances than in anything else. It is not uncommon to find children achieving in execution what former professors would have deemed impossible. Whether this is proof of any real advance in the science may be doubted, but certainly music has a greater real vitality than any other of the fine arts, and occupies a position in modern times probably occupied by sculpture in the palmy days of Greece.

There is too much competition in these days to permit of great deliberation in the exercise of art. An age of competition must be an age of rapid results and brilliant effects; in art, striking appeals to the perceptive side of memory, of incidents, and peculiarities, rather than to those influences which require leisure and reflection; and there will be expectation to find in works of art dexterous imitation of remembered things. But this, if made the end rather than the means, will extinguish art altogether, since it means competition when competition can only be defeat. The most perfect imitation the hand is capable of will be inferior to the perfect reproduction photography will give us.

I shall take advantage of Sir John's mention of Reynolds and Gainsborough to provoke some useful refutation, by stating that it seems to me the latter is by no means the rival of the former; though in this opinion I should expect to find myself in a minority of one. Reynolds knew

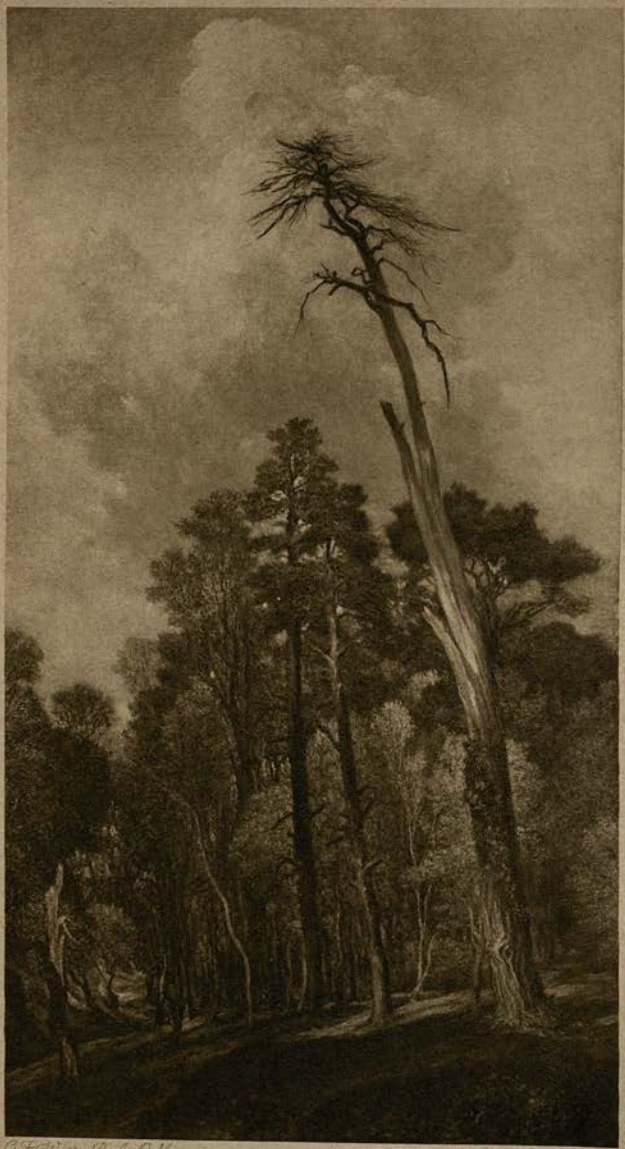
little about the human structure, Gainsborough nothing at all; Reynolds was not remarkable for good drawing, Gainsborough was remarkable for bad; nor did the latter ever approach Reynolds in dignity, colour, or force of character, as in the portraits of John Hunter and General Heathfield, for example. It may be conceded that more refinement, and perhaps individuality, is to be found in Gainsborough, but his manner (and both were mannerists) was scratchy and thin, while that of Reynolds was manly and rich. Neither Reynolds nor Gainsborough was capable of anything ideal; but the work of Reynolds indicates thought and reading, and I do not know of anything by Gainsborough conveying a like suggestion.

A little book by the Russian soldier and artist Verestchagin is interesting to the student. As a realist, he condemns all art founded on the principles of picture-makers, and depends only on exact imitation, and the conditions of accident. In our seeking after truth, and endeavour never to be unreal or affected, it must not be forgotten that this endeavour after truth is to be made with materials altogether unreal and different from the object to be imitated; nothing in a picture is real; indeed, the painter's art is the most unreal thing in the whole range of our efforts. Though art must be founded on nature, art and nature are distinctly different things; in a certain class of subjects probability may, indeed must, be violated, provided the violation is not disagreeable.

ON OUR ART OF TO-DAY

Everything in a work of art must accord. Though gloom and desolation would deepen the effects of a distressing incident, in real life such accompaniments are not necessary to make us feel a thrill of horror or awaken the keenest sympathy. The most awful circumstances may take place under the purest sky, and amid the most lovely surroundings. The human sensibilities will be too much affected by the human sympathies to heed the external conditions; but to awaken in a picture similar impressions certain artificial aids must be used; the general aspect must be troubled or sad.

Verestchagin says that the old-fashioned way of setting a portrait-head against a dark ground is not only unnecessary, but being usually untrue when a person is seen by daylight, should be exploded as false and unreal. But it is certain a light garish background will not permit a painted head to have the importance it would have in nature, where the actual facts, solidity, movement, play of light and shadow, personal knowledge of the individual or his history, joined to the effects of different planes, distances, materials, etc., will combine to invest the reality with an interest the most subtle and dexterous artistic contrivances cannot compete with, but which certainly the artist cannot with reason be asked to resign. A sense of the power of an autocrat, from whose lips one might be awaiting consignment to a dungeon or death, would be as much felt if he stood in front of the commonest



G.F. Watts R.A. O.M. 1903 — Emery Walker Sc.

Green Summer

Lilian

wall-paper, in the commonest lodging-house, in the meanest watering-place, but no such impressions could be conveyed by the painter who depicted such surroundings.

Lastly, I must strongly dissent from the opinion recently expressed by some, that seems to imply that a portrait-picture need have no interest excepting in the figure, and that the background had better be without any. This may be a good principle for producing an effect on the walls of an exhibition room, where the surroundings are incongruous and inharmonious; an intellectual or beautiful face should be more interesting than any accessories the artist could put into the background. No amount of elaboration in the background could disturb the attention of any one looking at the portrait of Julius the Second, by Raphael, also in the Tribune, which I cannot help thinking is *the* finished portrait in the world. A portrait is *the most truly historical picture*, and this the most monumental and historical of portraits. The longer one looks at it the more it demands attention. A superficial picture is like a superficial character—it may do for an acquaintance, but not for a friend. One never gets to the end of things to interest and admire in many old portrait-pictures.

G. F. WATTS.

X

MORE THOUGHTS ON OUR ART OF TO-DAY

I HAD hoped that the name of Gainsborough, so especially venerated, would have been vindicated from what may have appeared to be an unreasonable and even arrogant criticism made by me in a former letter in *The Magazine of Art*; perhaps it was thought to be too slight and thin an effort to be seriously regarded.

Unwilling it should be supposed I should have so little artistic sensibility as to be indifferent to great qualities, and so little veneration as to be capable of flinging captious disapproval where I ought rather to take off my hat and shoes, I propose to add a few words, as a student speaking to student, as I cannot say them to my fellow-students viva voce.

For Reynolds, within his limitations, I have the most profound admiration, and have seen flesh-painting by him that neither Titian nor any man who ever lived could excel. Of Gainsborough I know less, and perhaps have not seen his best; but I remember a whole-length portrait,

(it was, and perhaps still is, in the National Gallery) of a very ordinary personage in a pink coat, which for naturalness and unaffectedness could not be better. I ought also to say that I speak of Gainsborough with very imperfect knowledge, accident having always prevented me from seeing his collected pictures when they have been exhibited.

I have said that neither Reynolds nor Gainsborough could draw, and that both were mannerists; I will endeavour to exemplify my meaning. It seems to me that, from their portraits, almost any number of eyes might, with due regard to light and shadow, etc., be shifted and transferred from one to another.

Now, similar as eyes are, no two are the same, and this without reference to expression. In portraits by Reynolds the eyes are usually put in with an exceedingly direct and masterly touch, but with little attention to the actual and individual form; Reynolds was short-sighted. With Gainsborough there is more attention to the form rendered by line; but still, as in Reynolds, the eyes might be transferred.

Now take, for example, the eyes in the portrait called "Gervatius," in the National Gallery, attributed to Van Dyck, but hardly, I think, suggesting his work, though it would be difficult to attribute it to any other painter, unless, perhaps, on some occasion Rubens might have been inspired with so fervent a love for art that he forgot his satisfaction in scattering his over-

ripe dexterity! The eyes in this portrait are miracles of drawing and painting, and no one could for a moment think of fitting them in to any other painted head.

It is not necessary to descant upon the clearly indicated difference between bone, cartilage, muscle, and pulpy flesh, shown in the brow, cheek-bones, upper and lower lids, mouth, etc., all exactly representing nature and flesh in a most surprising degree.

How the eyes swim in the somewhat viscuous fluid! They are a little tired and over-worked, and do not so much *see* anything as indicate the thoughtful brain behind. How wonderful the flexible mouth, with the light shining through the sparse moustache! How tremulously yet firmly painted, no dexterous touch doing duty for manly explanation! The ear—how set on; it could not be moved by a hair's-breadth, or by any possibility transferred to any other painted head. So throughout, not to weary the student, there is no part of this wonderful portrait that might not be examined and enlarged upon; but I would ask my fellow-students to do this for themselves. What I would wish them to take special note of is, that there is not a touch put in for what is understood by the word "effect." Dexterous in a superlative degree, there is not in the ordinary sense a dexterous dab doing duty for honourable serious work; nothing done to look well at one distance or another, but to be right at every distance, whether examined with microscopic

attention, or looked at from a distance which would present only the general effect.

I think it inferior to Raphael's "Julius II." and Titian's "Charles V." because it comes so in competition with actual facts that the poetic impression is diminished. A waxwork representation which requires touch for certainty is less satisfactory as a work of art than the productions that produce a powerful intellectual impression, but exercise no deception at all. The Book of Nature is spread open, and may be read by all, but it is to most people a foreign language, understood better when ably translated.

So, although to my mind some portraits by Raphael and Titian are greater, intellectually nobler, I think the modern student will learn more from this picture than from any one I am acquainted with. It accords more with modern aims and tendencies, and the study of it can never mislead.

There is one thing to be added: all that has been well done is to be regarded only as showing what excellence may be reached, not as anything to be repeated by imitation. Nothing but peculiarities can ever be repeated, and he who follows will always be behind.

I think I have said enough to show my meaning when I said that neither Reynolds nor Gainsborough could draw, though I did not intend the remark should be applied to their portraiture; but in all I say I speak under correction, and only direct the student to principles.

ON OUR ART OF TO-DAY

It has been remarked, and accepted as a fact, that it was reserved for the modern mind to perceive and appreciate the charms of nature as seen in sky and sea, mountain-top, valley, and forest. This, I think, was not so; the poets, indeed, busied themselves with the mysteries of human passions and their consequences. But no one with mind attuned to nature, and trained by nature's interpreter, art, can stand amid the ruins of the Parthenon and, looking out on the surroundings, can fail to feel how the architect and sculptor were influenced by them, or that the endeavour to raise the soul into communication with what they felt to be noble and beautiful, gifts of the gods, was earnest and sincere—religious with the sense of religion, without which man is in many respects below the inferior animals.

Probably neither Ictinus nor Pheidias believed in the personality of Pallas Athene, but the symbol represented an idea of a spiritual and vital nature, such as humanity can never dispense with without bewilderment. To me it seems certain that in the age of Pericles, art—the pure art of the architect and sculptor—was carried to the uttermost human reach; commanding, intellectual, perfect in beauty; not emotional or spiritual as Christian art was.

Pheidias probably believed in the actual existence of Pallas Athene as much as Raphael believed in the actual existence of the Madonna when he painted his sublime "San Sisto," in an age and amid surroundings as sensual, as un-

spiritual, and as little devout as any the world has ever known. The natural spirituality of man found a resting place in a habit of unquestioning faith.

It appears certain that Pheidias must have been actuated by more than mere artistic impulse in the design and execution of the chryselephantine and bronze statues — the latter outside the Parthenon — so impressive that the barbarian invaders shrank abashed from its presence and forebore from their intended plunder.

These statues, could we now see them, would probably surprise us very much by their archaic character; certainly, they could in no sense have been realistic. Perhaps the Sphinx by the great Pyramid may afford some idea of what I mean.

The miraculous impressiveness of this creation must be felt by all, battered and ruined as it is. It could never have been like humanity, not for want of art or artistic ability in its designer, but intentional abstention; against the sky, the line of the cheek, a sweep of twenty feet, is as beautiful as in a Greek head.

The artistic ability displayed by the Egyptians in their jewellery, their unrivalled excellence in carving the very hardest materials, their astonishing workmanship in fitting together enormous blocks of stone, quarried above the first cataract, a distance of 600 miles, with the precision and perfection of a watchcase, can leave us no doubt that they would have been great artists if imposed conventionality had not prevented development in this direction; indeed, the earliest sculpture and

painting are so admirable as to challenge comparison with the best modern work. A group of geese, a fresco of the third or fourth dynasty, 2000 years before the Exodus, is as good as any work of the kind can be; a wooden statue of the same period, or earlier, might be a realistic work of yesterday; and a portrait of a well-nourished European gentleman, one sculptured squatting figure (all in the Boulack Museum), reminds me very much of Blake; while various carelessly executed groups engaged in domestic offices are such as Caldecott might have given us.

Though by no means an austere people, the Egyptians were eminently serious, and I think the imposed conventionality was intended to restrain art from becoming the servant of luxury which it has become in modern times.

Much less than justice has been done to this great people, the wisest and most dignified of antiquity, probably on account of the antagonism created by the Biblical account of the oppression of the Israelites.

The records of that oppression which must have been exercised in some province, the governor of which perished in the pursuit of the fugitives, have yet to be unearthed; they do not appear to be found among the general archives.

I myself have touched the actual hand of the Pharaoh of the day—Rameses the Second, who then ruled over Upper and Lower Egypt, under

whom the great temple of Karnac, begun by his grandfather, Rameses the First, and carried on by his father Seti, was finished.

Nothing in these sculptured records indicates the barbarity so apparent in the Assyrian slabs. On the contrary, it is abundantly proved that the Egyptians were a just and merciful people, who succoured the vanquished and abided by their treaties.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new." The ceaseless ebb of the receding tide had long left the shores of the bright artistic realm silent, tenantless, and dim, when the revival of the knowledge of the Greek language and Greek literature raised the long ebb into a wave that swept over civilised Europe. On its glittering crest the Venetian painters especially were lifted into the society of gods, goddesses, nymphs, and satyrs. They might see sky, sea, and earth peopled with radiant beings; perhaps with a sort of semi-belief such as we accord to the Lorelei and fairies, creations that somehow easily worked in with creeds and experience. Anyhow, they might see Pan come dallying down the sparkling brook-side, now shouting to the laughing brown nymphs rustling through the reeds and pretending to be afraid, now scattering a shower of notes from his pipes that would fall upon the ear as the brightness of the iris over a fountain falls upon the eye. Perhaps the phonograph may yet give us the voices of nature audible in the busy growing of her happy

children, flowers and plants. The poets have ever been seers and prophets !

As we journey onwards all things change. Before reaching us the bright wave subsided utterly into that long roll of the mighty swell that is ever carrying us towards the unknown.

So unfavourable are modern conditions that it is not probable the early glories of art, in the purely artistic unemotional sense, will ever again illumine the earth ; it belonged to the fresh morning of civilisation which cannot be simulated or renewed. Never again the like can be.

The muse of pure art has accompanied the voyagers on the Ocean of Time with reluctance, too natural to submit to the trammels of introspection and analysis with perfect ease. Her sisters of science, willingly accompanying, have gained in width of scope, and those of song, power and sweetness of voice.

If I claim for Pheidias that he was impressed by natural beauty, the sense of which is, I think, falsely denied to the past ages, the evidence is still stronger in the architects and builders of mediaeval times. In them one distinctly feels the influence of nature's beauty and grandeur, absent from other intellectual utterances. While even Dante finds nothing but brown horror in a forest, the builder of the cathedral feels and imitates the sacred majesty of the gloom ; while the monk thought he had something better to do than read God's Book in His works, the architect evidently studied them. He saw the

glory of piled up clouds and mountain-tops, and loved the infinity and grace of flower and tendril, tenderly caressing them into his work ; even the hovel and shanty partook of the wayward fantasy of nature. And now we have a curious fact ; is it in accordance with the change and oscillation which seem to be so evident a law ? As soon as literature and poetry opened their eyes to what is understood by the expression "the beauties of nature," the architects lost sight of them. Henceforth it mattered not how the most exquisite harmonies of nature were desecrated.

It may seem strange if I place the Venetian school and Titian, with his liberal line—which, however, is by no means wanting in reticence—in closer relationship with Greek art of the great period than the more classical schools of Tuscany and Rome ; but this seems to me to be clearly the fact. Supposing one were to endeavour to paint a restoration of the pediments of the Parthenon, it would be possible to interpolate with figures by Titian, never with any by Poussin, or, I think, even by Raphael or Michael Angelo.

Not long since I saw in Athens the group called the "Fates," casts only, but so near the ground that I was able to examine them as one cannot do in the British Museum. Well as I know them, I was struck with amazement ; the wealth of volume in the form, the ease and flow of curve, infinite variety of plane, refined precision and flexibility of completeness (corresponding

with the lightness of Venetian touch), as, for example, when the fine drapery lightly cuts into the flesh on the shoulders with such concealment of art that the great art-critic of the day when they were first seen, Payne Knight, regarded them as mere mason's work !

The volume, the richness, the ease are all distinctions of the Venetian school. Allowing for difference of material and Greek dignified reticence, I find a correspondence not discoverable anywhere else.

I would strongly recommend a periodical study of these most astonishing fragments. It is the fashion now to subscribe as to an established fact that they are excellent in the highest possible degree, subscribed to as the millionaire subscribes to the assurance that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and with pretty much the same result.

In spite of extravagant, and even absurd, defects (for the great artist's eyes no longer served him faithfully), when Titian, towards the end of a long life, painted the "Europa," in the possession of Lord Darnley, the muse who inspired Pheidias laid her hand on the old man's shoulder, and she inspired the wealth of volume, ease of line, and glowing sense of nature's exuberance.

That I should express profound admiration for that facility which makes the achievement look like a natural and unpremeditated outcome may seem in contradiction to what I formerly said—that the appearance of carelessness was a greater

fault than the appearance of elaboration; but neither Pheidias nor Titian ever call upon one to perceive with how little trouble they have worked any more than nature does. I repeat there is a want of veneration in affecting carelessness that is not characteristic of any real greatness, either in poetry or art, or anything else.

The position held by art in the days of Pericles as the exponent of man's religious and political outlook, retaining its religious functions in the Middle Ages, not its political, must be resigned to poetry and literature. Perhaps it will take its place by the side of the modern novel—Aaron's rod among intellectual efforts. Now and again the inherited delight in form will break out in an endeavour to express ideas by bygone symbols and fashions, for it will always be pleasant and refreshing in literature and art to take an occasional plunge into the purely suggestive. But this, most likely, will be rare, and always with conscious effort, which is as great an enemy to poetry as it is to art. Most probably art, in its most natural domain, is a thing of the past.

Child of the sun and of loveliness, a princess in olden times, she may become the handmaid of reality; she may busy herself tenderly in the cottage, the hospital, and the workhouse; and from Hogarth to François Millet prove how she can tell the story of everyday life, and call to mind human needs and sufferings. She will hardly compete with language, but in display of

beauty and splendour even poetry is a beggar by her side, for in splendour she was nurtured, and splendour is her natural home.

In an age of miracles she is left with less occupation than in simpler times. She cannot render the wonders of the photograph. ❦ Still, while human nature continues to be the same, we cannot think that art will ever cease to exist; and whatever may be her mission, or whatever he may set himself to say, the artist can only hope for real success through absolute conscientiousness. He must cultivate sincere convictions, and endeavour to carry them out with equal sincerity according to his means; and whether they will be abundant or slight will depend upon his thoughtful industry.

C. Smith, Lincoln, photo. Emery Walker ph. sc.

The Statue of Lord Tennyson at Lincoln
by G.F. Watts R.A. O.M.

XI

To Mr. Briton Riviere, who, at the Edinburgh meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Art, presided over the Section of Painting, Mr. Watts contributed the following paper. And to him he wrote from Little Holland House, October 2, 1889 :—

"I have not been in good working order since you were here, but in the interval of seediness, or rather when too seedy to work, I have been endeavouring to put two or three ideas together for the Congress, according to promise. Perhaps a sentence or two might be picked out and turned to account, but I don't know. I have what is scribbled put together in typewriting, so it will not be difficult to read. Shall I send it to you or will you come and fetch it? I shall soon be driven away by the approach of cold weather, so if you come to see us I shall be glad. I hope you have been well? The photographs of the 'Court of Death' are being framed for you."

And later he writes :—

"I hope my scribble for the Congress will be

excised, and indeed suppressed, if it is very unsatisfactory. I could not manage to say anything in a *decent* manner—not well I suppose, and at all times unequal to giving utterance to what I would say. Tell the Secretary I leave it to him to do exactly as he thinks fit, and shall be more pleased if the paper is not read."

THE NATIONAL POSITION OF ART.[1]

It is not easy to say anything new about art, but having been invited to address by proxy, as my health obliges, an audience whose purpose in assembling is to consider a subject to which the labour and thought of a long life have been entirely devoted, I cannot refrain from making the attempt.

It is unfortunate for the object of our special interest that neither the impulse nor the deep sense of its value are felt to have any real and natural place as constituents of our national dignity. Art is cared for as an embellishment upon which to spend money, but by no means having the national importance of the turf.

What I would specially bring to your consideration to-day is the position which art is worthy to hold amongst us, and hazard a few thoughts upon the ways and means by which

[1] A paper reprinted from the *Transactions* of the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry. Edinburgh Meeting, 1889.

we, who desire for it this national position, may endeavour to bring it about.

It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone," and these words are among the great truths whose widest significance is commonly unperceived.

Art since the beginning, and music from time immemorial, factors in the world's well-being, are more than ever valuable, and even necessary, in an age, like the present, of social surroundings devoid of outward beauty and nobility, where the workers have little leisure, and in a country where the uncertain climate precludes the general habits of outdoor recreation.

Of ancient music we know very little, even though the Greek myths and poetry are full of allusions to it, and the earliest records in the world, the sculptures on Egyptian monuments, prove its habitual employment not only in religious ceremonies, but also in enlivening the labours of peasant and artisan. To this day the labourers employed in drawing water from the banks of the Nile, or in loading and unloading vessels plying on its stream, do their work to the song of ancient days and the clapping of hands, rhythmically timing the raising, carrying, and depositing of their burdens. One understands in looking on such a scene and listening to the measure and song the myth that the walls of Thebes rose to the music of Amphion.

But early as the evidence of sensibility to impressions peculiar to man are manifested in music,

his faculty to receive and record objective impressions is evident in previous ages, to which it is impossible to assign any date, as testified by the scratches on bone by the cave-dwellers, and is, so far as we know, of all the mental faculties the very first to be developed. On the score of antiquity it may therefore lay claim to peculiar veneration, proved to be a natural and necessary language in the infancy of ideas.

But its best understood claim is based on its value in an overworked age as a graceful source of recreation, and as an educational factor. Eyes and mind little inclined to observe and receive pleasure and improvement from natural objects will often be stimulated by art to find pleasure in discovering for themselves the objects in nature that interested them in pictures. Natural objects presented to eyes that have been delighted by a beautiful representation of them will henceforth be very different from what they were before the representation gave them peculiar interest. The artist has been to these an interpreter of nature. He has revealed something more than had been previously perceived, and an awakened interest and delight takes the place of the old indifference. This is the pleasant, instructive, and popular use of art, and this alone would be sufficient to place it in an important position ; but in its higher manifestations it has a far greater reach and power, standing as it does on the same level with the greatest intellectual efforts of man. Nor can any nation be placed in the first rank

whose history is deficient in this respect. If we know nothing of their art and literature, they have no living interest for us; they are but names come down to us only as having some connection with those empires which have an existence through such intellectual legacy. Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage are nothing but names; Etruria, otherwise a mist, lives with us through some artistic pottery accidentally preserved. The material power of ancient Greece has passed away absolutely, and is no more. We read of it and can realise it, but it is no more actually real than any other recounted conditions or set of events presented to us by the novelist. We derive nothing from our knowledge of it, and it in no way affects our lives, while the immaterial vitality of the Greek mind, the creations of the Greek imagination, the brain-life of Homer, of Aeschylus, of Sophocles, of Plato, of Pheidias, have still an actual existence for us and will help to shape our lives for all time. So will be the comings and goings of our modern busy life, the buyings and sellings, the price of stocks, and even the setting up and pulling down of kings, and the quarrels of nations; and if our mental activity finds expression chiefly in these, our real life ends with the ending of the era. If, on the contrary, we leave behind us work embodying thoughts of living interest to mankind till the end of time, an imperishable vitality is secure to us. That this heritage may not be left by us imperfect

from the inarticulateness of art seems to me the supreme reason for the instituting of this Art Congress.

Art, child of leisure and the sun, has never yet come to its full growth in our cold and cloudy north, never showing itself in the full and gracious developments and beautiful arrangements to be found under more sunny skies; but the sense of it was never wholly absent, even here, in mediaeval times. A clasp, the decoration of a dagger's hilt, a thousand common things testify to a natural taste among the people, the highest expression of which remains with us still in our old cathedrals, our abbeys, and our castles.

In modern times there are plenty of artists but very little art in the nation, as a natural manifestation. If we find in the cottages and houses of our poor prints from the *Graphic* and cheap oleographs, we do not find on the part of the artisan or peasant any other attempt to introduce the least trace of what is interesting, because it is beautiful, into his surroundings; not a thing he uses possesses any grace or beauty of form or colour, and the eye of childhood is consequently never trained unconsciously or naturally to require those charms in after life.

This was not the case in Greece or Italy; every object was supposed to have, with its useful, its interesting side. In modern times it has come to be thought that beauty and utility are not only two different things, but that they are actually antagonistic; and yet art, to fulfil its

mission perfectly, must have a thoroughly natural and domestic expression.

In looking back upon the past, the circumstances in which art has struggled for life, here in these British Isles, may make one hopeful, seeing that it survives at all. No sooner were civil wars at an end, and circumstances had become more favourable to intellectual development, than the unfortunate direction which religious conviction took stamped out any artistic sentiment that still existed. All pleasure in beauty was a snare of the evil one; the melody of church bells was to poor Bunyan a torturing temptation directly from Satan, and to his mind it appeared certain that were he to indulge himself by pausing a moment under the church tower to listen, God would doubtless have caused it to fall and crush him to atoms for allowing himself this sinful enjoyment. In Scotland, the earnest character of the people caused them at a stirring time of strong revulsion of feeling to prefer the doctrine of Calvin to that of Luther, who by no means rejected beauty and joy as evidence of the Creator's power and an indication of His spirit. Calvin accepted a God to be dreaded rather than loved, the fierce and jealous deity of the Hebrews, the teaching of the Old rather than the New Testament. Actually condemning all the Creator's work of which we have absolute knowledge, they did not think it possible to look "from nature up to nature's God," but

rather believed they were recommending themselves to the Creator by regarding His most evident manifestations as abominations. Many a healthy pastime like the song or dance on the village green was killed by the chilling influence of these serious but mistaken views, blind to the significance of the teaching contained in the words, "Man shall not live by bread alone." What wonder is it now, when one thinks of the joyless leisure of our working men, that drunkenness has become our national sin? Never was a time when art and music were more required, healthful influences and necessary portions of that general education in which alone there is hope. But the modern mind, awakening to the sense of the value of beauty and joy, is confronted by the new enemy to art, the progress of invention bringing mechanical aid more and more into use and usurping more and more the place of the skilled workman's eye and hand.

Machinery is the most deadly foe to art and beauty because it is ever in active opposition to the sense of life that should be appreciable in all human productions. This reflex of nature, this something that has in it a sentiment of being and heart and conscience, is never absent from hand-work, however rude, and is never found in machine-work, however perfect.

Earnest attention to what belongs to the human and artistic qualities of any work, and the careful cultivation of all such, becomes a

matter of peculiar importance, and considering the question from a sufficient elevation to obtain a clear view of the whole, practical minds will come to see how completely art is bound up with all our material interests. To preserve the human element in work for the sake of work alone is therefore worth a great effort, for the sake of the workmen it is worth a still greater; and if by these meetings the minds of those who are in power in our commercial world, the heads of firms, often themselves men of culture, lovers and collectors of art, can be awakened to the inestimable worth of encouraging their workmen to be artistic by all possible means in their power, they will be rendering their country as splendid and far-reaching a service as the poets or philosophers of the day.

With them the responsibility rests whether this giant monster machinery is to be slave or master, whether man, his creator, understands the dignity of labour, or whether intelligent and sentient beings are to be ground down to the level of machines. The proportion of things is seldom kept in view. In the haste to be rich, the very man, perhaps, who finds his most refreshing leisure within the walls of his private picture gallery is in his daily work assisting to extinguish the life of this very art of which he believes himself to be so devout a lover; turning his workmen into machines, and pouring hideous and badly made articles out upon the world, every one of which weighs

in the scale against the chances of a national life for art, as it does against national reputation.

Some few minds in these last years, let us gratefully acknowledge, have awakened to the importance of this fact. The furniture within many of our homes, and their pleasant and picturesque aspect without, witness to these efforts; but to these let it be said, Your beautiful things are still only for the rich. Is it asking you too much to give this cheer to the cottage, where it is of really far greater importance? Cannot inexpensive things also be of noble design, the beauty of utility, solidity, and simplicity in the commonest cottage furniture, in pots and pans and crockery?

Considering the want of congenial environment, we may indeed wonder that art lives with us at all; that it does so proves it to be a natural and necessary expression latent in man. Almost every child makes some endeavour to draw when a pencil is put into his hand, but the innate sense is not very strong, and in our dull climate it must have the fostering and cultivation not needed where it was the outcome of the national character.

Academies and Art Institutions can no more create artists than colleges can create poets; they can afford the necessary education to develop the natural gift, and are performing very important functions when they provide favouring conditions for the indigenous plant;

but for anything hopeful of great things, the plant must be indigenous, growing from a root of its own, not a graft. There is a fashion and dilettante interest felt in art that would alone prevent the extinction of it; but this is not exactly what is wanted, and out of it much that is regrettable and even disastrous accrues. Every artist must know of constant appeals for aid, distressing to make and to receive. Disappointment and its consequences are more common in the profession of art than in any other. It is to be feared that not a little of this is to be traced back, first, to what appears at first sight to be so advantageous to art—art schools and exhibitions; and, secondly, to the art-loving public, who, accustomed to see art only upon the walls of transitory exhibitions of pictures, has forgotten that there is anything but picture-making to be required of the artist. In these days of competition for a livelihood, the misleading fashion of a number of people who visit these exhibitions for amusement, and this one-sided encouragement from art-lovers and patrons, has naturally called into existence an army of artists, all of whom cannot be sufficiently gifted for creating great works of art in painting or in sculpture, but many of whom would be of inestimable value were their gifts applied to decoration or design, for which, alas, there is now no demand. If, on the other hand, those rich enough to encourage art, and cultivated enough to reverence it for its divine use in elevating,

refining, and instructing, would but awake to the fact that picture-buying is not all that is needed for the encouragement of art amongst us; that if they truly love it, their care must be to develop its fullest and freest expression—then the ugly façade of the rich man's house would become a thing of beauty and a joy to the poor passer-by, and when the inside and the outside of the dwelling became delightful to good taste, the possessor might come to perceive that simplicity and utility in his clothing need not imply that it should be utterly ignoble in its character.

This need not tend to luxury; there is a refined simplicity and reticence in all that is perfectly beautiful which is incompatible with vulgar display, though not with splendour or magnificence in their place. While Mammon, the deity of the age, more cruel than Moloch, cold and unlovely, without dignity or magnificence, the meanest of the powers to whom incense has ever been offered, sits supreme, great art, as a child of the nation, cannot find a place; the seat is not wide enough for both.

Still further, in addressing the lovers of art, I would beg them to recognise the immense and valuable help they can give by the encouragement of all such work as tends to teach our working classes to love and honour it. In the activity of the Home Arts Association, the Handicrafts Guilds, and our now annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition in London, there is ample scope for their aid in a direction of most vital

importance, revivifying the natural artistic instincts of the British people.

That these are only latent the Home Arts Association has given ample proof, so ready a response has this band of voluntary teachers met with from the peasant and artisan wherever these classes have been instituted. Sprung from the work of one lady whose love of the beautiful had led her to share it with a poor crippled boy, teaching him to carve beautifully instead of doing the ugly work she had found in his hand, the boys of all the village round came to her asking to be taught too. From that one class quickly established the Association has grown to number 450 classes in England, Scotland, and Ireland, with its working centre at the Albert Hall in London, where the annual exhibition of beautiful handicrafts is more eloquent than any words in proclaiming its genuine worth, and the hold it is taking upon our people. In the activity of such work we have all that is most needed to revivify what was naturally artistic in the British Islands; and when, this faculty being awakened in the masses, artistic utterance shall become natural cultivation arising from acquaintance with what has been done by the divinely gifted under favouring conditions, it may give us an art which shall truly express and illustrate by its originality all that is peculiar and best in our modern life.

As it is now, it is perhaps scarcely to be wondered at if the British school of art, as a

school, does not illustrate or reflect the strength and vitality of the best modern thought as it undoubtedly should.

In the Greek art of the age of Pericles we see the Greek nation—the splendour of success, the rejoicing in victory, the love of beauty, the enjoyment of leisure after effort. The Chryselephantine Statues symbolised reliance on their own qualities embodied in the forms of Pallas Athene and Zeus. In nothing was Greece greater than in its art.

In the Middle Ages art in like manner reflected the spirit of the time. In Tuscany a long line from Cimabue to Michael Angelo worthily embodied the greatness and serious dignity of the church. In Venice the magnificence of the Republic was as splendidly upheld by the school culminating in Titian and Tintoretto; and should nothing of the history of these epochs be left for future ages but these artistic remains, the characteristics of the people might very exactly be evolved by the philosophical investigator.

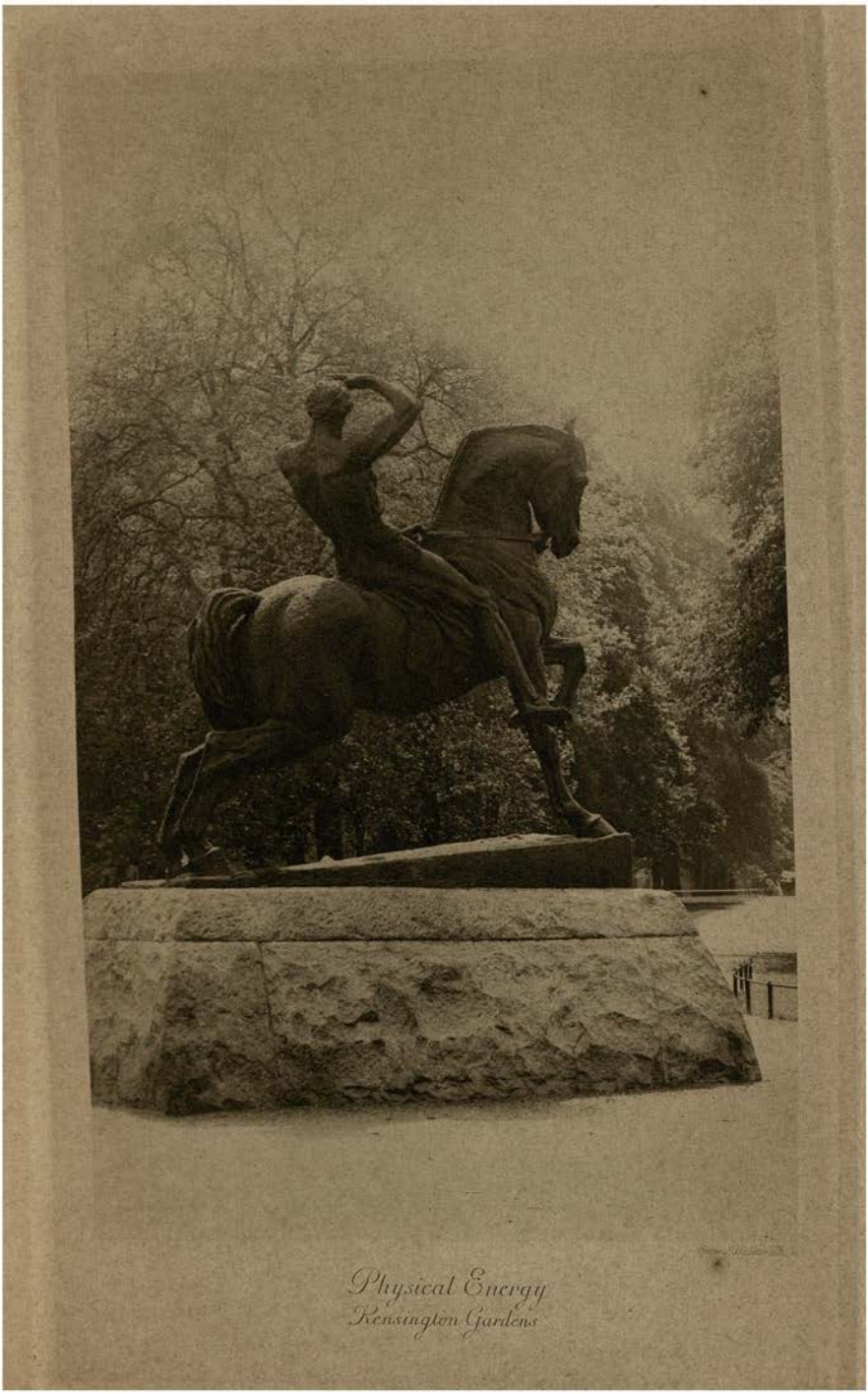
But in the British school of art I fear there would be little to assist the student in understanding the mind of the nineteenth century. In enterprise, in arms, in poetry, in worthy and high aims, the British nation can claim a dignified place among the most dignified. Can as much be said of the distinctive character of her school? Individual names will start into the memory, and to these time will do justice,

Physical Energy

Description by the sculptor.

"Physical Energy" is a symbol of that restless physical impulse to seek the still unachieved in the domain of material things. I always intended the work, ever since it assumed positive form and on a level with my series of symbolic pictures, to be national property.

The work was begun and carried on simply as an exercise, often left entirely untouched for a year, or only worked upon for a few hours during the year. Being in plaster, it could be left while other work occupied my time. The idea is symbolically to suggest that activity which (after something has been achieved) is impelling man to undertake a new enterprise. The horse restrained by the hand, which, as if on the tiller of a rudder, is not reining it back. This is a symbol of something done for the time, while the rider looks out for the next thing to do. The incline of the plinth is slightly symbolic of a rising wave. I do not wish my man to be like any model you could find anywhere; I do not wish my horse to be like a natural horse. I want them both to represent the characteristic of the human and the animal.



Physical Energy
Kensington Gardens

but I cannot think the school displays efforts worthy of the mental activity of our time.

The ever increasing sense of justice, the almost entirely modern development of sympathy, the desire to cast off hypocritical disguises at all costs, and the effort after truth in all things is not evident in our art as a school. For the professor of art is not called upon by the State to record the widely reaching influence of the British nation; of its greatness no splendid reflex is required from his hand. True, he is asked to portray the nation's heroes, its prophets, and its poets, but he is not himself asked to speak in stirring language or to stand among the leaders of thought as one of them, and point towards the light of progress to which all the earnest minded of to-day are pressing.

We want more intellectual demand made upon our artists.

Art is a language both spiritual and intellectual; if it lives now at all, it must live chiefly by its claim to this. Each advance of mechanical skill cheapens the art which is mere realism. When the nation understands that its art is inextricably bound up with all its material prosperity, its spiritual life, and intellectual vigour, then, and only then, will Britain boast an art that will live for future ages by the side of her great and noble literature.

XII

ON PLAIN HANDICRAFTS

In 1892 Mr. Watts was asked by the Editor, Mr. A. H. Macmurdo, to write a few prefatory remarks for a small volume entitled *Plain Handicrafts*, containing essays by various writers as "a guide to elementary practice." He accordingly wrote the following pages which to some extent represent the value he set upon individual effort to re-vitalise the Crafts and lesser Arts in our country.

PREFACE

I have been asked to supply a few words by way of preface to these papers that are written in furtherance of the work of the Plain Handicrafts. Feeling my inability to do this gracefully and competently, I have yielded only to prove my profound sympathy with the work and the workers. I look upon the movement as one of the most useful among modern efforts, and

regret it is not in my power to offer more active participation.

Any institution which has for its object to brighten the lives of those who have not been favoured by fortune and accident should claim encouragement and help from all who have leisure or other means of affording them. When in addition the object is to vitalise and develop faculties,—the especial inheritance of the human race, but strangely dormant in our time among the largest section of the community,—the claim becomes one that cannot be ignored. Looking at the subject from a point of view commanding a wide horizon, it seems to be nothing less than a social demand, rising into a religious duty, to make every endeavour in the direction of supplying all possible compensating consolation for the routine of daily work, become so mechanical and dreary. When home is without charm, and country without attaching bonds, the existence of a nation is rudely shaken; dull discontent, leading to sullen resentment, may readily become active animosity. Those will not be much interested in the maintenance of law and order who feel that law and order bring them no perceptible personal advantage. In the race for wealth it has been forgotten that wealth alone can offer neither dignity nor permanent safety—no dignity, if the mass of the population is degraded by dull toil and disgraceful competition; no safety, if large numbers drag on a discontented existence, when the more active and intelligent

leave our shores to become, if not enemies, at least sons retaining very little love for the mother that has been so unloving.

> The world is too much with us late and soon,
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.

So wrote Wordsworth half a century ago; and this direction of energy, this current of general activity, has been setting in with daily increased force ever since his time, till every discovery and every invention is prompted by or made to serve, if not immediately, prospectively, one end—getting and spending. Whether or not our material wealth is to be increased or diminished, it is certain that a more general well-being and contentment must be striven for. A happy nation will be a wealthy nation, wealthy in the best sense, in the assurance that its children can be depended upon in case of need, wealth above the fortune of war, and safety above the reach of fortune. The rush of interest in the direction of what are understood as worldly advantages has trampled out the sense of pleasure in the beautiful, and the need of its presence as an element essential to the satisfaction of daily life, which must have been unconsciously felt in ages less absorbed in acquiring wealth for itself alone, proved by the fact that in everything done or used there was an apparent touch of the artistic sense, in buildings, in costume, in pageants, in all things from a temple to the meanest utensil. Our Art Congresses would have been in olden times as needless

as congresses to impress on the general mind the advantages of money-making would be in these. Thought and Imagination are the attributes of man alone, and every object and every natural combination that can meet his eye will have power to foster these great gifts; but the eye may be closed, the faculties may be developed or remain in abeyance, or become hereditarily lost. With us as a nation the faculties of observation and appreciation have been strangely parted with; we seem to be no longer naturally able to perceive the beauty and exquisite adaptations that surround us, or we could not in our daily life be satisfied with the ugliness and ignobleness it has become invested with. Yet we cannot step upon a yard of turf without setting our feet upon variety, beauty, and completeness the whole generation of man since the beginning has been incompetent to imitate. If man's humility should revolt against the teaching that all has been created for his delight, the imaginative side of his nature will equally revolt against the teaching that all is the result of mechanical arrangement or blind accident; a little presumption is more in accordance with his best human sympathies and highest human needs. The necessity to make all classes acquainted with the written language by which human thought is conveyed is now universally felt; the object of the Plain Handicrafts is to widely open the book of nature; a very little interpretation soon enables the scholar to listen to the silent speech that is

so eloquent. The boy encouraged to imitate some natural object will ever after see in that object something unseen and unknown to him before, and he will find the time he formerly did not know what to do with—a state of being that continually drives thousands to the congested metropolis—henceforth full of pleasurable sensations. To lead the weary toiler along the dreary road of everyday mechanical work into its wayside gardens, to open closed eyes to a world of loveliness and grace where every flower that blows and every tendril that twines enlist themselves in his service and become his friends, is the function of the Plain Handicraft. Love of nature and appreciation of the grace and manifold charms to be found in it must be, by all who have been taught to look for them, great part of the completeness of life, a completeness which, according to their limitations, all should have a share in, as much as in daily food, as actual a brotherhood as in breathing. In endeavouring to bring about this we best complete our own lives. The hunger for brotherhood is at the bottom of the unrest of the modern civilised world.

G. F. WATTS.

G. F. Watts R.A. O.M. 1904 — Emery Walker Ltd.

Whence — Whither

XIII

OUR RACE AS PIONEERS

WHAT is our position, and what are our necessities?

One thing we may be certain of: if the Creator had any purpose in creation, all must be working according to His will for definite ends, and man is only the agent.

There is nothing material or visible in which the law of Movement is not discernible: whether what we understand by progress is visible or not, we may be justified in believing that all is working to a definite end. Is it too fanciful to believe that an equally definite law directs and governs the acts of men and States? States rise when there is work for them to do on the planet, and fall when they have accomplished their work or have proved themselves incapable of it.

Man's position is distinctly marked out in the Great Ancient Story—"There was not a man to till the ground!" All had been set in order, it was all good, growth and evolution eternally provided for, but an agent was required to keep

the machinery in motion ; as the earthworm was wanted to break up the soil, so man was wanted to till the ground. Not to till it merely by scratching it up with the plough, but by clearing the jungle, irrigating the arid waste, controlling the torrent, draining the swamp, and extirpating destructive reptiles and insects. The agent, Man, was wanted. He is a necessity.

What the earth would be without his work may be illustrated and proved by what it has become in the once fertile Campagna of Rome, which now through neglect is uninhabitable and poisonous.

It is certain that modern civilisation has not brought with it all virtue and happiness, but it makes a better state of things possible, and has made clearer the perception of right and wrong, to be hereafter fruitful of general good. In our ever probing onward, seeming to be so absolutely selfish, we, the English people, are perhaps the agents of the great law—Movement, Progress, Evolution.

This theme and what it implies is hateful to many thinkers with much apparent reason, but in the present effect our work is that of the pioneer, who, forcing his way through the jungle, destroys many beautiful flowers, while at the same time he prepares the soil by letting in light and air, and affords the means of the desired development. The whole earth is now required for the increasing multitudes with their manifold conditions ; but the races are not proportionally

developing in physical properties. This pioneering is carrying out the purpose of the great Lord of the soil, whose labourers work without knowledge of His fixed intention.

The "Great Scheme" may be subject to changes such as govern human conditions, where all is movement, change, mutability; mutability, which means the immutability of permanence, which is vitality, which the very changes perfect. Reflection, therefore, will not permit the conclusion that the forces which govern human conditions are distinct from, and outside the government of, the Divine regulation of the material forces of nature.

It is in accordance certainly with every sect of Christianity to believe that a ruling Power exists, which takes cognisance of, governs, and consequently limits, human actions. That being so, it is no great stretch of imagination to believe that the decreed purpose is given to men to work out: conscience and experience directing for good; and indifference, recklessness, and evil intention culminating in disaster. It is as much a responsibility, and culpable, to neglect conscience and experience in individuals and nations, as it is indolently to neglect acting upon the principles of evolution when we have become conscious of the law, and as certain to be punished by loss of great vital powers in individuals and place in nations, as by conscious vice. Surely we may say, then, that it is not fanciful to trace the rise and fall of empires to the same law that regulates

all things, from the precession of the equinoxes to the circulation of the blood. All this science makes us acquainted with the constitutional construction of physics in nature. It cannot, then, be a very extravagant flight of imagination to see in nations this great law at work, directing a purpose. The tangible and intangible alike may be for a purpose; but one thing is certain—all that has a beginning has an end, the end always coming from internal decay in the case of organisms, and most apparent in empires, where it is always brought about by the decay of the qualities that gave them birth and held them up.

"They also serve who only stand and wait" can scarcely be applicable here. Civilisation admits of no standing still; there can be no loitering in Fleet Street, for the policeman's "Move on" would soon make itself heard.

The law of expansion is the law of vitality, and consequently of humanity, broken down it may be in one place and stretched in another—for it is certain that civilisation so lurches out of the real line of march as to make us absolutely regret a ruder time; but our efforts at civilisation, even when they fail, still clear the way for further civilisation, the only road by which better things may be reached.

Civilisation is like a flood, a mighty overwhelming flood, not so much caused by storms, or even the onward rolling of the great ocean, but by the welling up of the mighty mass of

waters from beneath, forcing its way over the earth, steadily and perceptibly rising ; and unless outlets be found and channels created (whereby it may be made beneficial and irrigatory), it will submerge much that is fair and worthy of permanence.

The great empires would seem to be tools in the hand of the mighty Designer, they do their work and carry activity into waste places. When, as tools, they have done all they can be useful for, or become unfit for the work, these tools that the Designer has made are thrown aside, to be replaced by others better adapted to the shaping or to the occasion.

Great social and political movements are the outcome of circumstances, over which individuals, and even communities, seem to have little control, while they are only instrumental in shaping events. So Rome had to conquer Carthage, to make laws and roads and open the way for civilisation. This Carthage would never have done.

Carthage had great fighters and captains, but she would never have taken a lead in progress. The empires of antiquity fell when they ceased to aid progress ; many barriers forbade advance, which time and progress have now removed.

We do not know much about the States overrun by the Israelites in taking possession of Palestine, but it is probable they were degraded by superstition and debased by ease.

The words of Balaam prove that he saw in the compact and disciplined host before him qualities against which his countrymen would be unable successfully to contend.

Greece went as far as conditions permitted her great intellectual powers to go, and felt the check. Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh, Carthage, Rome, and Jerusalem decayed, and were succeeded by others better fitted to carry on the work.

Perhaps the present state of things in China may imply that by the law that demands progress the hour is come for the change by outward pressure which it refuses to make by internal effort. The Chinese Empire presents us with the unique fact in known history of a nation remaining at the same point without progress or decay. This condition could not have been possible but for the geographical position of China, neither surrounded by active and aspiring peoples nor a highroad to anywhere.

This is why we must be in South Africa, and later not we alone, but Germany and Russia, working to one end; and regarding the present war in the light of personal or even of merely national interest to ourselves would be looking at it from a superficial though natural point of view —instead of this, we should look at it from the point of view at issue. It is really a war in the interests of civilisation, and so regards not merely ourselves, but the world at large, for many a long year.

Our conflict with the Boers may be explained

as the outcome of that law which says "Forward!" The Boers stop the way—they are unprogressive; though a fine, manly race they stand still, they are like children; children are delightful people, but they cannot stand all day and idle in the stream, while the stress and strife of the highway goes on beside them. A childish people with child-like merits and childish credulity, having a child's idea of religion, a creed of 900 years B.C. The Old Testament alone seems to be their Bible, for, with all their Puritanical religious sentiments, they are terribly wanting in Christian gentleness.

They are a pastoral people. The pastoral life may be a beautiful one, but it is not a progressive one. It may be likened to a lovely island in the midst of a turbulent ocean, an oasis in a savage waste, which could never exist in these modern times of unrest. A pastoral community is delightful, certainly, but impossible in Cheapside. The greatest friends and admirers of the Boers represent them as a primitive and pastoral people. Some may say, "Nothing can be more desirable than such a state"; it may be so, but nevertheless it is an impossible one, rendered impossible by the advance of knowledge, the wants created, and the activity thereby engendered in these days of restlessness and increased necessities. There can be no inactivity. The pastoral life of the Boers is an anachronism.

The intention was that man should reap the product of infinite development; thus, when man

becomes a member of a highly complicated state in which the consequent necessities oblige radiating activity, a merely pastoral state, however innocent and delightful, becomes impossible. No peoples can live unmolested on the face of the earth if they do not move with the current. Investigation proves that movement and progress are a Divine law ; the Boer ignores this law—he only wishes to be quiet. During his occupation of the land he has hardly cleared or irrigated it. He has done nothing, and from his character is not likely to do anything, for literature, science, or art. He has produced no poem or Volkslied, made no contribution to discovery, or even to the natural history he has had such opportunities of studying—in fact, contributed nothing to progress. Wholly unproductive.

His place in the army of real Freedom and Progress is vacant. The necessary elements for creating a great nationality are not to be found in him ; and even if he were to become master of the immense tract of South Africa, that tract would be lost to civilisation until the Great Law gave it over to some active nationality.

Having the qualities of a primitive people, the Boers might live happily on some small island, but in their place as rulers cannot appreciate an immense tract of the globe. Some active and progressive people must replace them, and at present no people seem better fitted to do it than we are.

The Boers are a crafty people, in many

respects semi-civilised. Even sympathisers with them tell us that, in spite of their heroic determination to enter into a conflict so unequal, they are not only unprogressive but have degenerated from their Dutch ancestors. Indolence is one of their characteristics, which they seem to have inherited from the animal nature by which they are surrounded, and the savage peoples they have dispossessed.

We notice in the Boers the Homeric character of their fighting qualities, but with it an absence of poetic sense and love of beauty ; the courage of Achilles without his splendour, without the grace of the heroic pupil of Chiron. Crafty as Ulysses, without his sense or appreciation of beauty, which obliged the warrior (knowing he could not trust himself) to make his mariners tie him to the mast, when passing the Sirens, lest he should be powerless to resist their charms. A defect certainly, but one that in a nation gives it not only a Shakespeare and a Wordsworth, but the stimulant to exertion outside mere animal enjoyment and success.

It may seem arrogant to say the Earth is made for those who can bring out its possibilities, but at any rate we must obey the demands of our necessities. We have no more right than others, but we have greater necessities. What is our right? The right that the inevitable imposes upon us. The light of Truth shall set the face of Judgment severely straight.

As a nation we have been more than any

other pioneers, and we may claim the right to be so, as long as we continue to be a nation. Our work is necessary even if, being experimental, it does not appear to be all for good. We watch the minute-hand on the dial-plate, but do not know the hour. We are but as tools in the hands of the unthinkable Designer, for the working out of, to us, an unseen great purpose.

History no doubt repeats itself, for the story of Humanity, physically and morally, is ever the same, and ever must be ; yet, when needs which are the spring of action change, though no change takes place in the physical and moral state, passion and emotion exact as much elasticity as the law permits. History therefore presents no exact prototype of a modern state of things. Science, which by increasing our needs, real or fancied, has practically abolished Time and Space as formerly known, and placed at our disposal means of satisfying our real and fancied wants and of destroying what we dislike, has destroyed the exact parallel it formerly presented.

We know our solar system is impelled onwards towards some point in space. Humanity seems to be subject to the same law, impelled by an irresistible impulse onward.

Many, seeing that progress and civilisation have not in all cases been an unmixed improvement, cry " Let alone ! " But " Let alone ! " is not possible in these days. " Forward " is the voice of the law. Therefore it is almost an altruistic duty to explain that we as a nation must obey

and cannot help ourselves, and so, if possible, make ourselves better understood.

In the case of the Transvaal, rightful ownership to a whole country can hardly be established by a squatter of little more than fifty years' standing. We were there before the Dutch, and at best the claim of the Boers is the right of conquest, and by this right they demand the withdrawal of the British from the Transvaal. If we concede that as a right, we have the prior claim to it. More than one contribution on the subject has been published to our certain knowledge. In the *Times* issue for November 3, 1899, it is shown, and proved from records and dates, that our flag was planted in South Africa in 1620, long before the Dutch were there; that in all directions the territory was explored by successive Englishmen many years before the Boers were in the country at all.

The Boers are not the aborigines, or even discoverers—they are only squatters establishing themselves by conquest, and very savage conquest (on one occasion slaughtering three thousand of the natives without losing on their side a single man). They would not have maintained their position but for our aid, as, later, the native warriors would have swept them away. For that aid they accepted our suzerainty.

Our acknowledged right—the right of possession which first occupation of savage or unoccupied land gives—was resigned; and only when the Boers proved themselves incapable of

governing with justice and sense, did we again assert our right to step in, claiming justice (the same justice that we should have accorded Dutch settlers in an English colony) and securing it for the Uitlanders, who are mainly our subjects. Thus from our action we may conclude that we ourselves, when most successful, are but clearing the waste places for younger nations. Our envied possessions are only to pass to others. Labourers less for ourselves than for those who are waiting for the fruit of our labours to fall to them.

Our natural qualities seem to be those of a pioneering, enterprising people, adapting ourselves most naturally to differences of climate, not much bound by family or domestic ties or turning much to home—a questionable merit from a moral point of view, but marking us out for colonisation and as agents working for some future that we know nothing of and cannot foresee—really pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the profit of others and so not deserving the envy of our possessions, which we only hold in trust.

The mission of pioneering seems to be forced upon us by a combination of circumstances.

The necessity of providing for an excess of population, which cannot be restrained by any means civilisation will allow—internal means of sustenance being quite beyond our capabilities.

The influx of aliens.—None would wish to

shut these out. One of our greatest glories is the asylum, the freedom we offer, to even our enemies; but it increases our difficulties. The constant inflowing of strangers impels our already overflowing population abroad; and though we may seem to have no right anywhere out of our own little island, we are helplessly pushed forward, to make room for those pouring in from all parts of the world.

Our restricted area.—The space that must be found for our overflowing population gives a distinct reason to the active forward movement which looks like lust for conquest. What we want is a clear perception and sense of right that conscience should approve alone, and that conscience should be rigidly acted upon, and earnestly obeyed.

Inevitable social and political measures claim obedience which may be at variance with the spiritual and ethical conscience. The latter at this juncture may justify the Boers rather than us; but there comes in the question of necessity, apparent laws that contest with pure right and wrong. The virtues of Sparta were as fatal to the permanence of the State as the faults of Athens; the former barred the way to progress, while the latter gave progress a wrong direction.

Our good friends abroad, who do not see the necessity which is such a vital one to us, are of the same mind as Talleyrand, who, after repeated applications for help from his nephew, demurred;

upon which the young man said, "Mais il faut vivre," and Talleyrand made answer, "Je ne vois pas la nécessité."

With our population of millions we cannot sit down and starve, and it is of no use to listen either to remonstrances or threats.

Our uncertain climate.—This in a far smaller degree, yet to some extent and under certain circumstances, necessitates our seeking more equable and settled conditions.

Our national characteristics.—These are the spirit of activity and enterprise and the love of commerce. The top that ceases to spin, falls. Nothing can stop us but the Leader's baton thrown down (which would mean to us loss of the first place in the army of pioneers, which the Great Law has given us), and at any time it may appoint another Power to supersede us. The contributions the British people have made in the application of science, invention, and discovery to the use of mankind are greater perhaps than those of any other nation.

We are sometimes called a "Nation of Shopkeepers," which a nation that exists by commerce must be more or less, but we need not be a "Nation of Sharpers." If the shopkeeping element has been prominent, it has ceased to be especially characteristic or remarkable for active endeavour to profit at the expense of others.

We cannot be a conquering nation, and do not desire to be if we could; we cannot be an

agricultural people—neither our space nor our climate will permit of it; but as we must live, nothing remains but commerce.

Napoleon said, "War cannot be made with rose-water"; and so commerce, as it is necessary to us, cannot be carried on without competition and pushing the limits of our interests. The result of competition can only be conflict—war—unless some other outlet can be found. Commerce will not supply this; its very activity, which is its health and life, will produce the ambitious envy and jarring interests that will be as fatal to peace as former mere love of power. The principle, movement, may in humanity be explained by impulse to activity; it is as certain as in the solar systems, and must, being a natural law, have its safety-valve, its outlet. This has always been war. The advocates of peace think the competition of commerce will be the equivalent, but this accord will only be a temporary calm to the accumulating irritation of interests always threatening and preparing for war, inevitable war.

Unless the pressure can be diverted, commerce (except when on the co-operative system) will be as active in generating the fierce unrest as ever the lust of power has been, more sordid, and certainly not less destructive. The goddess Trade, the modern Pandora, has in her box all the evils that can affect mankind. The lime-light of modern civilisation seems mainly to bring out the glitter of gold. At present the

abolition of war is out of the question. How can commerce, as understood by the principles of trade, abolish it ?

The object of strife is only shifted, conflict is the law of vitality, but with the advance of knowledge the aim of the century should be to raise the standard of public morals and improve the condition of the population mentally and physically, thinking less of material things and more of those qualities which are in the long run sure to command even material advantages —a sane mind in a sane body.

Interest honourably prosecuted without intentional injury to other interests and rights, our enterprising and commercial activity need not excite alarms or excite jealousy in others. The simple principles of right and wrong are easily defined, and, like the quality of mercy, should not be strained ; but the complexity of human affairs and legitimate interests, conducing to the activity demanded by the great law—Movement —makes some elasticity necessary, even when there is the most honest desire to be just.

Every patriotic Englishman will be jealous for the future honour of his country, and will lay to heart Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "Lest we forget," but, while remembering and endeavouring to avoid self-complacency, will also endeavour to make constant and earnest efforts to keep abreast with the changes of the "Old Order" time brings about.

The rise and fall of nations being in accordance

with the great law, empires look in history like the drops of water that fall from a revolving wheel in a mill-stream. They glitter and drop off, replaced by others as the wheel turns, ever rising and falling, ever the same motion.

The undeniable loss of prestige, and the rancour exhibited by surrounding nations, make our position one of great peril, only to be met by some heroic impulse permeating all classes, such as the religious revivals of olden time or of the Turf now, when every gutter child feels a throb of excitement at the name of the favourite and the state of the odds! No doubt the fierce—it would be ungenerous to say malevolent—rivalry may be too much for any single Power to compete with, and we may lose all, for we shall lose all if we cease to be one of the dominant Powers. But even with all our faults we may look forward to the judgment of the future without fear. Ill-mannered and wholly wanting in foresight, our aspirations have never been ignoble, nor have we been cruel in carrying them out. We have been in the van of the army of progress and freedom; the principles of our criminal law have been carried to an extreme of tenderness, no man is accounted guilty till positive and material proof is established, no vengeance has followed failure, our door has always been open to the oppressed and miserable, and we have extended to all the freedom we believe to be a birthright; we have never denied benefits or forgotten generosity; and if

we fall, it must be with the dignity of Caesar arranging his robes.

A couple of lines taken from the prayer of Ajax in Pope's *Homer* (always delightful to me as being the first book I ever read) run thus:

> If we must perish, we thy will obey,
> But let us perish in the light of day.

G. F. WATTS.

G. F. Watts, R.A., O.M. Emery Walker, Ph. sc.

Destiny

(Designed and painted 1901).

XIV

THOUGHTS ON LIFE

I

THOUGH I am utterly unable to formulate speculations upon the place of man in the scheme of creation, I recognise one fact, that we are here placed as it were in a mysterious hall vaulted by the blue heavens, with its magnificent lights and glories, and that, dwelling under this vault in the presence of the Creator, it behoves us to be on our good behaviour, and to accept the position with some seriousness, with modesty, with kindness, with sympathy, and above all with sincerity—sincerity—*sincerity*! Not unrejoicing in the beauty around us, not unconscious of its wonders.

II

I see creation as a huge piece of machinery in which man is as much a part, and in the vast space of time, almost as little independent as the earth. I see the past in the present and the present in the future.

III

In the grandeur and universality of astro-

nomical phenomena we forget the insignificant. Life in all its forms, in all its restlessness, in all its pageantry, disappears in the magnitude and remoteness of the perspective. The mind sees only the gorgeous fabric of the universe, recognises only the divine architect, and ponders but on cycles of glory or of desolation. If the pride of man is ever to be mocked, or his vanity mortified, or his selfishness rebuked, it is under the influence of these sublime studies.

IV

The two greatest ideas man has hitherto had are gravitation and evolution. These best and most truly explain creation. By these all natural phenomena are explained. Can they also explain man's history and mind? Does the soul gravitate to a centre? to be again thrown off. All is progression, revolution, evolution, and gravitation towards renewal.

V

The knowledge of two things would have made Plato and Marcus Aurelius as nearly right as the limitations of human nature and intellect will permit—the doctrine of altruism, and the law of evolution.

VI

I trust in progress and believe in progress, the most liberal of all principles. Does the unrest which is so distinguishing a characteristic

of these times imply that nature is about to make one of her revolutions? or does it merely imply the uneasiness of the snake about to burst the restrictions of the old skin? Nature seems to be constantly making tentative efforts and experiments. We do not now believe that the great hemispheres were so created at a blow. Evolution seems to be a divine law, and as well defined a law as gravitation.

VII

Space is annihilated, time is annihilated by science. Greed must be annihilated, and the civilised world must have one language for co-operation.

VIII

Good and evil are interwoven, or even in spirals; nature does not tangle her work.

IX

The stability of all depends on the mutability of all. Nature abhors permanent inactivity as much as a vacuum.

X

It almost seems to be an established law that nothing in nature stands alone, infinite in her subtle varieties she is economical in her fundamental foundations.

XI

Except for the consequences of our actions,

every departed day is the end of the world to each of us. No new day finds us in exactly the same position. While we have slept, myriads have died, and myriads have been born. Even the universal world has been changing, our whole system has been hurrying on to some one point in the universe. Our great world has countless myriads of animalculi which have been at work, building up new cliffs or destroying those which have long existed. Laying these things to heart, we should ardently strive to make this new life an advance upon the past one, tempering our regrets, marshalling our experiences, and profiting by the knowledge we have gained. We must especially remember that if we have entered upon a new life with its changes, we must be prepared to find that life has been renewed to others; perhaps, in their case, with greater changes. We shall not then account those fickle who seem to be untrue.

In the garden young buds have expanded and old blossoms have withered. We must not confine even our individual existence in the Ego, but accept inevitable changes as the result of new conditions. To attempt to encircle the world with our own girdle means that we do not take in its dimensions.

Man should go on struggling to success through failure, till the whole earth is made serene and fit for what man may then become: the whole of the habitable earth to be brought under the influence of man at his best, when he

himself is far advanced enough for the purpose; millions of acres and swamp to be reclaimed; brutality to be subdued; to let in light and beauty into dismal sloughs of darkness and death, swamps of malaria—the darkness of worse than animal brutality of the human creature with sufficient human intellect to be consciously brutal. Would not such an impulse and combination be a second crusade?—and nobler than the first. Not to rescue the place of a tomb, but to raise up life. Surely this competition is the law of humanity, and might enlist the most Christian sympathies. It would be like giving an extra spin to the planet, an accelerated roll in the divine direction. What a crusade!

XII

Man is God's ambassador on earth.

XIII

I trust in progress, but how is it to be carried out? I do not know, as I have not studied politics, not because I do not care, but because I cannot trust myself not to become absorbed by them. If I can see any possible solution it is that politicians should work less with a desire to confute than to convince. It does not appear to me that this is the object of party spirit. I cannot approve of invectives and violence, though it may be said that party spirit is mainly kept alive by these. If I had a thousand votes, and corresponding influence, I would not use them in

the name of any one party. I acknowledge the wholesomeness and the necessity of party views, but I see they are too often lost sight of in party spirit. We cannot all see and think alike in matters of detail, but we might agree on principles. I want England to do what is right and just, certain that that alone succeeds in the long run.

XIV

Party spirit is the violation of the first principle of national life.

XV

Party in politics should be as mustard to beef —to give it piquancy—but it should be in a similar proportion.

XVI

I do not feel hopeful of any real progress while government is carried on by party, instead of concurrent desire after justice and truth; while material wealth is held to be the highest aim, while mechanical operation takes the place of healthy and interesting labour, while the active spirits of the labouring classes are taught to think emigration the best thing, while the grand race of fishermen around our coasts are driven away by steam trawling for the sake of Mammon, leaving mainly the squalid and undersized millions of the unhealthy slums to represent the race that has made Great Britain

what it is. The idea that more and more money is the one thing most desirable has taken such root, that I feel our lease as a great power has very nearly run out. We want another Jonah to make his warning cry ring in our ears. I am convinced that Nemesis, that power which the Greeks felt to be so watchful and relentless, is on our track.

XVII

When men cease to care for family ties and country, it is a very bad thing for country and family. It is as true that charity begins at home as that it should not end there.

XVIII

The millions of parts composing a nation are not so numerous or various as the forces that go to make up and vitalise the human body. In an ordinarily healthy body these act in concert. It is the disintegration religiously, politically, and socially, that disturbs the present and arrests progress.

XIX

How tremendous are the issues of life and death, and the march of that Nemesis which if it does not always overtake man, most certainly does overtake nations.

XX

It is a sad thing to have to find grievous fault with our own family and country, but we must

make up our mind to accept the fact that compared with some other peoples we are a dull nation, and that we are falling behind in a manner that ought to alarm. Whether this is by contrast with the progress made elsewhere, or whether we have degenerated, may be a question yet to be answered, but the fact remains patent, that unless heroic efforts are made, in time the result must be very disastrous.

XXI

What is wanted is the endeavour to create a great people ; not to educate specially one section or another. The elements doubtless exist, the abiding sense of freedom we claim for ourselves we are willing to extend to others.

XXII

The character of an individual is his greatest possession. The character of a nation is its one great possession. Inasmuch as a nation is greater than an individual, character is the more important to it.

XXIII

The British nation during a long time of thought and action has achieved much to ennoble and benefit humanity. However much we may have left undone, however much we have strayed from the right direction, no nation has proclaimed greater truths, or shown greater unrest under wrong-doing.

XXIV

The love of freedom is the nation's poetic individuality, and we owe it to the world to maintain our influence for freedom's sake.

XXV

After two thousand years of preaching from the gospel of peace and goodwill, it is disheartening to find that nothing is really respected but force. The fact must be acknowledged and provided against. The merchant service manned almost entirely by foreigners cannot be expected to act as defenders of our country. The cause that reduces us to the humiliation of employing mercenaries is significant to the last degree.

XXVI

War may be, and it is to be hoped must be, modified, and rarely appealed to, but so long as human beings have passions (and a passionless world is not conceivable, for various interests and temperaments must ever exist) these will lead man to disagreements, and this to a settlement by force.

XXVII

It is contrary to the spirit of the nation to desire military glory, but if we are to maintain our position we must cultivate military qualities. We especially require officers and leaders. It has been said that the cricket field and public

school training of character give us the finest material. No doubt the young officers prove themselves in courage and generosity worthy descendants of the Black Prince, but the born leader is rare, and the gilded youth of the day gets rid of all thought of his profession as he throws off his uniform. The leadership does not mean courage alone; there comes a time in the life of the strongest when the physical capability diminishes, while the brain is unimpaired.

XXVIII

Our danger is immensely increased by the almost complete decay of our rural population—the men that could at a moment's notice be turned into such formidable soldiers as under Edward III. over-matched the chivalry of France. Our agricultural population is perhaps the backbone of the nation; it is true man does not progress by his vertebræ, but he cannot get on without this.

XXIX

We must have a military material something like that which formerly existed in England, when every man was obliged to practise shooting with the long-bow. We must create a material by education that in a short time would become an army and navy; a material fit to compete not only in the field, but with minds educated to observe.

We want the equivalent of the men who won

Poitiers and Cressy, men who by their habits and training—the consequence of necessity—when taken from their ordinary occupation, became at a moment's notice sailors or soldiers.

There is no doubt we must establish a solid overwhelming force upon the sea, a real national power capable of being recruited at short notice.

XXX

Alfred must still be our leader; he laid the foundation of England's power by his first naval victory. He did not wait for attack, but put out to sea to meet the invader. To maintain our position we must consider our Britain as a ship, we must live at sea mainly, and train our soldiers at sea. And this whether we retain our possessions in this part of the globe or another. If masters at sea we shall be masters of all necessary to our happiness and influence, and can colonise to any extent. The instinctive uneasiness of foreign states on the subject of our supremacy at sea is sufficient proof of its permanent importance. At present the augmentation of our fleet is by other nations looked upon with distrust as implying a wish for further land conquest, which would not be necessary if our home were on the illimitable ocean. Commerce might assume a grander aspect, and the love of horse-racing be given to a form of competition in which human pluck and ability would have part. The scandal of the slums would be practically

abolished, for the unsatisfactory element of our population would not be confined to any special locality. It would indeed have the greatest opportunity of being converted to become the most useful member of the state.

This may be a dream of the future perhaps, but not an impossible one. In a great degree it is the only way by which our weight and power can be made at all permanent. The day may come when conflict between us and other nations may encourage alliances to deprive us of the dominions we possess, dotted all over the world. A Britain on the ocean would not be so tempting.

XXXI

The Great Britain of the future must float upon the sea. What an undisciplined force can do under favourable circumstances has been shown by the Boers. The discipline of sailors can be easily understood, a discipline which would not unfit the recruit for taking up any other vocation, but which would very greatly help him to succeed by the development of his faculties for precision, observation, and quickness, with greater physical activity. And besides these he would have the advantage of the prestige which still clings to our navy. All classes might take an interest in this training for the great international, or rather grand universal, race-course.

XXXII

To Mr. Douglas Murray Mr. Watts wrote in 1903 on the subject of small training-ships as schools for the boys of our slums, to whom, otherwise, every advantage in life would be denied, and who were likely to become members of the criminal class.

"I am miserable when thinking (and I seldom forget) of the want of foresight, and the indifference to consequences which so imperil the future. I have for the last forty years endeavoured to call attention, and to keep in mind universal principles. At the end of a long life I for ever grieve over our want of patriotism and dulness,—but I can no more."

And later he writes:—

"My object is not to create sailors or soldiers or anything else but Man, a national backbone out of a class which has hardly any chance of becoming anything but criminals, tramps, or loafers; a disgrace to humanity, and a dishonour and peril to the nation. It is something like a crime in those who might make efforts, to leave these poor souls in their slough. This irrespective of any other considerations.

"Some four years ago, and the matter is not likely to be much mended, statistics told of two hundred and seventy odd thousand annually sent to prison. What becomes of the children of these? Taking into account as well the children of tramps and paupers, these amount to a population.

"It is the children of these who cannot or won't educate the poor things I would take, to train them body and soul, simply, and with reference to real efficiency. I suggest small ships round the coast and as much of the sailor's training as possible, because, having spent some months on board a man-of-war, I know what the sailor is. I suggest that training on ships, because, unless taken away altogether from surroundings and habits, very little could be done. It would cost something—much—but much would be saved.

"I cannot use the arguments that might be urged, I have neither time nor ability, but I have a deep and abiding feeling of the danger and the wrong from every point of view, policy, and religion."

XXXIII

What I really want is to develop the qualities which make us a great people, and which would extort admiration from our bitterest enemies; moral qualities which make us worthy to be the standard-bearers of freedom. The realisation of these qualities would give us in every nation a strong moral support. I want it to be seen that if we strive to plant our flag on every soil, the real idea is not what is seen on the surface, but that we work in conformity with that law of progress which is apparent in all things, which is apparent as a grand universal law. To create enthusiasm for the knowledge of the spiritual,

the intellectual, and the moral dignity of working for the good of humanity, in each and every order of society from high to low, would be to supply strong hands to keep our flag from falling.

XXXIV

Such training schools should be round the coast for the sake of the more healthy conditions ; but this especially to remove the children from their environment, and afford opportunities for the physical education and practice which are imperatively necessary. Horses cannot be trained for the race-course in London stables.

XXXV

Hooliganism is misplaced activity. Restless spirits are as much a natural force as dynamite and gun-powder, but these may be confined and brought into subjection and use. The very qualities which under adverse conditions make the hooligan might give us a great soldier.

XXXVI

In time of impending famine there is small wisdom in waiting till the famished demand bread before we begin to store the grain. We want some great national impulse, some movement equivalent to the crusades, or in our own times to the volunteer movement ; one vitalising in a noble direction. In these days of fierce competition the watchword should be "Onward." We must make up our mind to heroic

efforts. It will not do to merely watch the minute hand of the clock; we must know the hour.

XXXVII

The dignity of the army should be preserved. It is a noble profession, for what can a man give more than his life? The army might be made a great school, a preparation of men for filling worthily every other position of great activity, so that the soldier's uniform, now regarded as indicating almost the lowest place in society, should be esteemed as it formerly was, when the man-at-arms received the support of the most powerful.

XXXVIII

The time has wellnigh come for the substitution of a wider comprehension of the duties of humanity. The truth was taught nineteen centuries ago, but the teaching was imperfectly understood, and still more imperfectly carried out. Sympathy and brotherhood were supposed to be limited to those of the same way of thinking. The time has wellnigh come when true fellowship, equality in duty, and equality in aspiration may be brought about. Not social equality; this never has been possible, and never can be possible; but equality in hope, equality in sympathy, as nature has insisted on equality in suffering, both at our birth and at our death. Position, education, and power should mark out the leaders; first in all things,

most of all in virtue. The crusader whose glory it was to smite the infidel should to-day make it his glory to smite that which is wrong.

Youth will have to be bred to, and grow up in, the comprehension that as a matter of course purely selfish ideas are to be substituted by a sense of sacrifice for the general well-being, and that the state cannot be healthy or the country safe unless there be a general contentment. This is the brotherhood to be desired and aimed at, far removed from that which would claim actual equality in position, in influence, in possessions. These things are not possible for the state any more than for the family. Youth with its impressionable nature might easily be saturated with the social spirit. It should be impressed upon children that the individual is, before all, under an obligation to become a useful member of society. They should be told that property has its duties, that it is only by service rendered to the community that inherited property becomes legitimately owned. There is a proverb which says, "What thou hast inherited from thy father earn, that thou mayest make it thine own." "Why have we the highest place," says Sarpeidon to Glaucus, "but because we are first when danger threatens, and spare ourselves least."

In the race for wealth it has been forgotten that wealth in a nation without contentment can offer neither dignity nor safety. Wealth is but a factor in the power of a nation. The qualities

that spring from the higher endowments of man cannot be ignored. We in these days hardly realise how great was the influence of Dibden's songs in the making of Nelson. Whether our material resources are to be increased or diminished it is certain that our general well-being must be striven for. A happy nation will be a healthy nation. In the rush after gold on the one hand, and in the struggle for material existence on the other, the wealth which is above the fortunes of war, the wealth of a contented spirit, which is a possible possession even when worldly goods are few, has been stamped out of existence.

What could save us would be that the upper classes should take up again the supervision they gave in olden times. If the nation was in danger, or a crusade had to be carried on, it was not left to the lower orders to initiate and undertake the enterprise. It was then the great nobles who did not scruple to spend their money, mortgage their estates, and even suffer the greatest privations for the cause. I think they must again become the leaders, earnest in endeavour to combat wrong and intent even to sacrifice some worldly prosperity to this end. We want a general co-operation of every class for national well-being, that class most active which has the greatest leisure and the most abundant means.

It is certain that we have accumulated wealth, but compare the position we occupy now with that which we know we occupied after Waterloo.

At that time we were unquestionably the greatest power. Our wealth has increased, but has our influence ?

XXXIX

Let the endeavour be to keep the name of Britain honourable, white, and beautiful in times to come, when we shall take our place among the things that have been. The history of empires is the same story over and over again, with a variation of method which accords to the race and the climate. The real history of man is to be found in his efforts to grasp an idea of his mysterious psychical nature, to understand his strivings after the unknown and incomprehensible. To this element of his story has to be added that which denotes the gratification of his animal impulses—a struggle for mastery ; but a thread of yearning for something other and higher is found in increasing strength through his religious and moral aspirations. Notwithstanding the incessant backward ebb, the evolution of these may be detected, and is the result of his ever strenuously reaching forward and looking upward.

XL

A student of Life and Death, I perceive clearly that distinctions are the natural outcome of civilisation, to be honoured when they help to keep alive aspirations and efforts after what is best in humanity.

XLI

Modern civilisation is destroying classes. Classes are not a bad thing, being natural. Originally each nation and each class had its costume. The world loses something by destruction of distinctions, a natural law of animal, vegetable, and mineral creation. Instead of destroying all such distinctions it would be wiser if each class could find delight in its own distinctive work, though, of course, translation from one to another according to fitness should be easy. Classes will in reality exist till doomsday.

XLII

All great and generous reforms must originate with the upper class. I think the time has now come for this to assume its rightful place, that of real leadership. I am sure the time has come to say "Awake! Arise! or be forever fallen!"—we want a social Mahomet.

XLIII

It will not do to consider class questions from a merely class point of view; real co-operation is necessary, or there will be bitter repentance when sitting among the shattered ruins of former greatness.

XLIV

In this our orchestra of life the instruments, even in the subordinate parts, must be as per-

fectly in tune as those that are to perform the leading passages. With us in modern times the harmony is sadly deficient, some of the notes are altogether wanting, while some are strained above the concert pitch. Certainly every effort should be made to bring about the true efficiency. All should work who care for what is right, for what is right in the abstract.

XLV

I have come to the conclusion that whatever we have of health, or strength, or intellect, or experience, or wealth, or rank, if not used for the general benefit of mankind, or at least for the diffusion of happiness as widely as may be in our power, will become a source of unhappiness almost certainly here, and perhaps of severe judgment hereafter.

XLVI

The English are naturally a religious people; however much we may fail to act in accordance with the laws of strict religion and its foundations in morality, there is always a sense of these which is not hypocrisy.

But the complications of social and political life place the spiritual and even the moral life on so different a plane that it requires a conscious effort to stimulate them into a balance of equal activity. The spiritual, especially in minds spiritually constituted, is pushed aside to give the other full play; the habitual consciousness

of business and ordinary occupation must be moved away to make room. This involved posture of the mind places the modern man in a position very inferior to that of the Greek, whose perfect practice of his religion of beauty was in his everyday habits of life as almost a necessity of that life in its familiar completeness. No effort was required by them to step from one train of thought to the other.

XLVII

Man will never put forth his best powers without an appeal being made in his work to the spiritual side, the sense of something different to that which is of everyday life.

XLVIII

The happiest life is that which most develops the qualities necessary for the making of a nation, and which are no less necessary to its maintenance. When the worker finds his work interesting he is happy; without interest it is a toil, always to be escaped from if possible.

XLIX

Mankind has made many unworthy experiments in search of happiness and contentment. Only one is left, that of a universal endeavour after sympathy and love—that sympathy and love of humanity which by developing its noblest characteristics will lead it to greater heights and a purer atmosphere.

L

We want to aspire after brotherhood — a brotherhood consisting of kindness, generosity, and protection, large of heart and hand, ready to comprehend grandly, and extend nobly.

LI

The direction of modern thought points to a socialistic equality, which means a plain level in possessions not possible amongst human beings who are made unequal by nature, and which, if it could be arrived at, would turn the earth into one vast hive swarming with beings only intent upon the materialistic providing for material needs by the still further development of mechanical appliances. More steam engines, more factories, more straight lines of railroad, or some means of rapid transit, of necessity unbeautiful and artificial, removed still farther and farther from the natural condition of man. Following the law (which science teaches us has always been in force), man must then become another creature, he may become as different from the present race of humanity as the present is from the troglodytes. Will this be development or retrogression? Will he eat of the tree of knowledge till he becomes a god, or will he analyse till he sinks into drivelment? Some great change is doubtless approaching; the cataclasm may come sooner than the more natural operation of the law of change would bring

about. Society being divided generally into two sections, those who have very much and those who have very little, it does not seem to be able even to endeavour after the combination and co-operation which might retard what is perhaps inevitable. Anyhow the "good old plan," that they should take who have the power and "they should keep who can," is not the one now best adapted to ensure general success. Co-operation and the desire to share will probably be better.

LII

Socialism taking the form of co-operation would be the great agent of peace. But Socialism as generally understood will break up all existing security; its principles are likely to shake every government in the near future. Justice, truth, and generosity should be the objects after which we should strive, and in this we may find our stability.

LIII

Reformers who set class against class are mistaken. It should be insisted on and shown that justice in government is for the good of all, that if any class is mistaken, the mistakes are to be rectified for the whole body. Justice and right must be the centre of all things.

LIV

Greed and Mammon-worship weigh us down

on one side, the only balance being misery on the other, till the vessel of the State lurches alarmingly even in smooth water; what will happen if storms arise? Is there no remedy? Socialism which would work equality will not do; there can be no equality, the thing is not found in nature. Republicanism which would destroy everything is a remedy, if possible, worse than the disease.

LV

Few things are more striking than the fact that while the best are nearly powerless to effect beneficial changes, the worst are so potent. No individual is infallible to cure, but all are absolutely powerful to destroy. None since the world began has been able to bring the dead to life, but each has been able to kill. No man can, unaided, even with all the appliances of science, construct an ordinary house, but the weakest might, if so determined, destroy a city. No man can hurry natural operations to make one tree grow faster than its natural pace, but any man can destroy a forest, the growth of centuries, in a few hours.

LVI

Reformers partaking in the general development of excitability are more likely to be carried away by considerations of small issues, and in losing sight of the larger they so far become unpatriotic.

LVII

The socialism of enthusiasts is not possible. Community of good and power is no more within the range of universal law than community of intellect and beauty, or any other of the natural gifts. What is desirable and should be striven for is community of generosity, of aspiration, and efforts towards the best that humanity can desire.

LVIII

What is wanted? Co-operation, equality in usefulness. Do we want nature's teaching? We shall find it written in her laws distinctly enough.

Real education must be the development and training of the faculties, intellectual and physical, that will be required for usefulness and success in individual and national being. The word has come to mean, in elementary schools, a burdening of the brain with much that is of almost no use in the struggle for life or, in the higher schools, with that which is only learnt to be forgotten. All that does not stimulate and develop the natural faculties, especially that of observation, is really no education at all; nor is reading or even technical acquirement of the value supposed. Bacon says, "reading makes a full man"; so does food, but food that is not digested and assimilated, so far from making muscle,

makes only unwieldy flesh, which the individual would be much better without. All that is not, or cannot be, actively applied is almost, nay quite, valueless in the struggle for life in modern times.

LIX

Education too often means substitution of spectacles for natural sight, and spectacles too often become blinkers. A telescope, while rendering many objects exceptionally clear, shuts out the general view.

LX

The object of education should not be to overload the brain, but to make it active and give direction to its activity.

The horse that is ridden will do more than the riderless one, but not if the rider is but a dull weight, a something he has to carry. Put a student of the Duke of Newcastle's book [1] on the methods of his *manège* with a sharp pair of spurs on a horse that requires riding, and see what will become of him! Such a horse is the intellect, such a rider education—giving purpose and direction to it, and such a pair of spurs the necessities of existence impose.

LXI

The Persians taught their youth to ride, shoot, and speak the truth. This epitomises

[1] *Méthode et Invention Nouvelle de dresser les Chevaux.* (Written by the Duke of Newcastle when in exile during the Commonwealth.)

the whole question; to ride means to have a firm seat, supple joints and muscles, to give to movement and progress light hands on the reins, with iron wrist on the curb when necessary. Does not this comprise all government? To shoot with the bow means observation, judgment, precision, strength; here are symbolised all the active requirements of life. To the use of the bow may perhaps be ascribed the position England holds by inheritance to this day. The bowman of old stepped forward while he shot out his bow-hand in the direction of the mark, taking aim less with his eye than his mind. Thus the ancient formula for education was the teaching of youth to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth; and the first two may be accepted as symbols of the development of qualities necessary to the material and practical, the last one as the germ of all moral and religious conduct between man and man. It means family and clan reliance, to be extended in all the relations of what afterwards became a more complicated life.

LXII

We see more, but we do not see so well; we hear more, but not so distinctly as the natural man. Life in its social bearing becomes complicated, like art and music, and our notions become complex and confused; all that can tend to keep alive the simple impressions should if possible be encouraged.

For the natural child-like sense of enjoyment has much departed from us. We have sympathy with riches, we have sympathy with progress, what we want is sympathy with happiness. The Puritanical element crushed the sense of enjoyment out of the English heart; it replaced it perhaps with what was more valuable—earnestness, but that seems to be worn out in the masses. The want of the faculty of enjoyment, now that the will of the mass really governs, makes itself fearfully felt. It obliges them to find gratifications in such unhealthy distractions as gambling, incessant smoking, constant use of stimulants, etc.—to become victims to dyspepsia or mania.

LXIII

Any work done, any result of labour, can never be absolutely useless. The workman stimulated to observation becomes an inventor; he goes to his work eager to overcome yesterday's difficulties. Nature delights in conflict! Life of every kind is conflict and endeavour; when these cease there is no life—when the healthy activities cease in a man's life he becomes a mere vegetable or he rushes into excesses.

The finger of God is on the dial-plate. The great laws do not seem to recognise individuals, yet nothing that comes into any kind of life, that which grows, decays, and dies, but is a part of the Divine Essence.

LXIV

In the mind of man we have more than the attributes of the Deity, we have a portion of His essence. Man's mind is not the Deity, its knowledge of the past is partial, it has been gained by effort, and of the future it knows nothing, it is not infinite. It is a portion—an infinitesimal portion—and this unequally bestowed. At its greatest it shivers on the verge of the knowable, and strives in vain to scale or plumb beyond. In thought it travels to the confines of space, to the verge of eternity; but on the threshold of the home of the infinite it stands arrested by an impassable line. Creation shows nothing that is the equal of the mind of man. Have we turned this material to full account?

LXV

Man is superior to the highest type of animals only by having the divine spirit in him, the endowment of conscience. Conscience constitutes his dignity here, and will constitute his reward or punishment hereafter.

LXVI

No great mental effort can be disassociated from spiritual inspiration.

LXVII

Christianity may yet evolve an infallible church, the church of the universal conscience,

that we, abandoning self as selfishness, might find the truer, greater self in all humanity, in the self of others—the universal Self. In an age given up to the worship of Mammon, in the form of wealth and power, it will be well for all preachers to unite in making a demand for obedience to this the eleventh commandment, so expressly given by the founder of Christianity.

LXVIII

Nothing is lost, even unwritten thoughts do their work. Good thoughts, like breezes from the mountains, purify the moral atmosphere, and the resulting actions. Evil thoughts shape the character, and spread disastrous consequences, for they are positively infectious. We are thus all of us fearfully responsible.

As seen throughout nature, the universal conflict is a distressing fact, but one that is useless to deny.

LXIX

The law of creation is movement and conflict. Movement is life, stagnation is death. Conflict means conquest or defeat, therefore there will always be the good and the not good. Nevertheless the evils that afflict humanity are greatly in excess of what the natural law determines.

LXX

There may be only one truth, as there is only one sun, but man is obliged to build himself a house with many windows. I cannot see that

the sun does not shine through all of those turned towards him.

As the sun shines through many windows, so the church has many doors; these race and temperament require, and though set at different angles they may all lead to the same altar.

LXXI

I live in habitual consciousness of larger issues, and cannot long be affected by anything of purely personal interest.

LXXII

What do I know about the Infinite excepting that it is too great to be anywhere little?

LXXIII

Religion is the effort of mankind to reach out to an idea of the Infinite. Creed is the effort of men to give tangible shape to this idea.

LXXIV

Creed is the railway carriage; it won't take you on your journey unless you have the engine, which is active religion.

LXXV

Conscience is the ethical manifestation of reason.

LXXVI

Creed is the outline to confine the otherwise vague idea, but religion may exist independent of

creeds, one which embraces all that has for motive sympathy and elevation.

LXXVII

The knowledge of right and wrong in the simple abstract does not seem to me to be solved by dogmatic teaching.

LXXVIII

Perhaps we take up our life in the future just as it has been here at the end. It must be a better one, it must have purer perceptions, greater knowledge, possibly still with its pains which may be the acute sense of our misdeeds—the positive knowledge that all is written in an open book.

LXXIX

Given a belief in the immortality of the soul, which is the belief of all Christians, the idea of purgatory or of reward and punishment is reasonable. To believe that the souls of the departed may be relieved by the survivor's actions is noble and infinitely beneficial. That one's own efforts after what is right and good can be transferred to the account of the departed would be of all others productive of ardent effort.

Such labour of love, if not freeing the departed souls, would infinitely raise the living; it is hardly possible to conceive a more divinely beautiful endeavour. To suppose this could be vicariously brought about by money is monstrous.

LXXX

Nothing that we have belongs only to self; even our griefs demand that they should be shared by others by sympathy. For every sanction of pain a corresponding effort to relieve should be made; we must watch ourselves in the indulgence of our griefs lest it become as great a selfishness as indifference to the past and a forgetfulness of those we have loved.

LXXXI

Every conscious effort should be made to acquire the habit of doing our best unconsciously. We desire success when we honestly do our best to succeed; if we fail we are humiliated, but not disgraced in our own estimation, and the opinion of the world is of less consequence.

LXXXII

Life is made up of to-day and yesterday, to-morrow has never been.

LXXXIII

Extract from a letter.

I do not think such independence as you will find in me will ever shock you. It is not asserted as a right by claim to superior intellect, nor is it in the nature of cavilling. It is but in obedience to something within me which I judge not to be evil, because it is never in opposition to that which I know of as best in the thoughts and actions of the best that have been.

THOUGHTS ON LIFE

Some of us are wheels, some are drags; the drags are necessary, but the wheels are inevitable. Our different temperaments are given, not assumed.

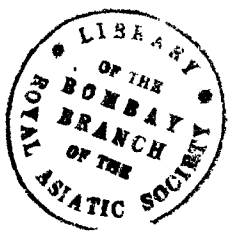
LXXXIV

There is no law more distinctly divine than that which says, "Onwards!"

LXXXV

Many hear the dream recounted, many see the writing on the wall, but even among the most sincere the Josephs and Daniels are few.

THE END



Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, *Edinburgh.*

A SELECTION OF WORKS ON ART

MEMORIALS OF EDWARD BURNE-JONES. By G. B.-J. With 41 Photogravure Plates and other Illustrations. Second Edition. Two vols. 8vo. 30s. net. Cheaper Edition. With 2 Photogravure Plates and other Illustrations. Two vols. 8vo. 5s. net.

THE HERKOMERS. Vol. I. Library Edition. With 6 Illustrations. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net. Large Paper Edition. With 28 Illustrations. 4to. 25s. net. Vol. II. With 8 Illustrations. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

THE TRAINING OF THE MEMORY IN ART AND THE EDUCATION OF THE ARTIST. By LECOQ DE BOISBAUDRAN. Translated by L. D. LUARD. With an Introduction by Prof. SELWYN IMAGE, M.A. Illustrated. 8vo. 6s. net.

THE PRACTICE OF WATER COLOUR PAINTING. Illustrated by the work of Modern Artists. By A. L. BALDRY. With 37 Illustrations in Colour by distinguished Artists. Crown 4to. 12s. net.

THE VENETIAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING. By EVELYN MARCH PHILLIPPS. Illustrated. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

INDIVIDUALITY AND ART. By HERBERT E. A. FURST. Illustrated. Extra Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

MORNINGS WITH MASTERS OF ART. By H. H. POWERS, Ph.D. Illustrated. 8vo. 8s. 6d. net.

ALBRECHT DÜRER. His Life, and a Selection of his Works, with Explanatory Comments by Dr. FRIEDRICH NÜCHTER. Translated by LUCY D. WILLIAMS. With 54 Plates (1 in Colour). Imperial 4to. 6s. net.

A POPULAR HANDBOOK TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY. Including Notes collected from the Works of Mr. RUSKIN. By Sir EDWARD T. COOK. Revised and Rearranged throughout. In Two Vols. Crown 8vo. Thin Paper. Leather Binding.

Vol. I. FOREIGN SCHOOLS. Eighth Edition. 10s. net.
Vol. II. BRITISH SCHOOLS (including the Tate Gallery). Seventh Edition. 10s. net.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

A SELECTION OF WORKS ON ART

THE SACRED SHRINE. A Study of the Poetry and Art of the Catholic Church. By YRJÖ HIRN. 8vo. 14s. net.

THE ORIGINS OF ART. A Psychological and Sociological Inquiry. By YRJÖ HIRN. 8vo. 10s. net.

AESTHETIC AS SCIENCE OF EXPRESSION AND GENERAL LINGUISTIC. Translated from the Italian of BENEDETTO CROCE by DOUGLAS AINSLIE, B.A. 8vo. 10s. net.

THOUGHTS ABOUT ART. By PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON. Crown 8vo. 8s. 6d.

THE RENAISSANCE: STUDIES IN ART AND POETRY. By WALTER PATER, M.A. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net. Cheap Edition. Globe 8vo. 1s. net.

STUDIES IN THE ART ANATOMY OF ANIMALS. Designed for the use of Sculptors, Painters, Illustrators, Naturalists, and Taxidermists. By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON. Illustrated. 4to. 30s. net.

THE FRENCH PASTELLISTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By HALDANE MACFALL. Edited by T. LEMAN HARE. With 40 Plates in Colour and 12 in Black. Demy 4to. 42s. net.

FRENCH PRINTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By RALPH NEVILL. Illustrated. 8vo. 15s. net.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COLOUR PRINTS. By JULIA FRANKAU. Second Edition. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

A CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ OF THE WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT DUTCH PAINTERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. Based on the Work of JOHN SMITH, by C. HOFSTEDE DE GROOT. Translated and Edited by EDWARD G. HAWKE. In Ten Vols. Royal 8vo. 25s. net each.

Vol. I. Jan Steen, Gabriel Metsu, Gerard Dou, Pieter de Hooch, Carel Fabritius, Johannes Vermeer.
Vol. II. The Works of Aelbert Cuyp and Philips Wouwerman.
Vol. III. Frans Hals, Adriaen van Ostade, Isack van Ostade, and Adriaen Brouwer.
Vol. IV. Jacob van Ruisdael, Meindert Hobbema, Adriaen van de Velde, and Paulus Potter.
Vol. V. Gerard ter Borch, Caspar Netscher, Pieter van Slingeland, Gottfried Schalken, Eglan Hendrik van der Neer.
Vol. VI. Rembrandt, Nicolaes Maes. [*In the Press.*

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

00022805

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018